THE WIFE of *BATH.*

A

COMEDY.

As it is ACTED at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS.

Written by Mr. *GAY.*

Reviſed and *Altered* by the AUTHOR.

——— *Magicis ſanos avertere ſacris*
Experiar ſenſus. VIRG.

LONDON:
Printed for BERNARD LINTOT, at the *Croſs-Keys* between the *Temple-Gates* in *Fleetſtreet.*
MDCCXXX.

(Price One Shilling and Sixpence.)

26
57
AUG

PROLOGUE.

IF laviſh Dryden *ſo profuſely writ,*
That ev'n his Prologues *too were cramm'd with Wit;*
'Tis not for us in this our firſt Eſſay
To waſte in Prologue *what might ſtarve the* Play:
Leſt we be found, like Marriages in Faſhion,
With nothing good beſides the Preparation.
So then, like antient Bards, 'tis now our Care,
Only to read his little Bill of Fare.
He draws his Characters from Chaucer's *Days,*
On which our Grandſires are profuſe of Praiſe;
When all Mankind,——— (if we'll believe Tradition,)
Jogg'd on in ſettled Conjugal Fruition:
Then, as Old Wives with ſerious Nod will tell us,
The wiſe contented Husband ne'er was jealous;
The youthful Bride no ſep'rate Trading drives,
Ev'n Citizens could——— ſatisfy their Wives.
The cautious Virgin, ignorant of Man,
No Glances threw, nor exercis'd the Fan;
Found Love a Stranger to her eaſy Breaſt,
And till the Wedding-Night——— enjoy'd her Reſt.
No gilded Chariot drew the Ladies Eyes,
Enſnar'd their Hearts, and bore away the Prize;
Then the ſtrict Father no hard Bargains drove
For Jointures:—— All the Settlement was Love.

PROLOGUE.

Believe all this who will: ——— *For let me die!*
They knew the World as well as You and I.
Lovers would Then, as now-a-days, forſwear;
Seize the ſoft Moment, and ſurprize the Fair,
And many a modeſt, knowing Bride was led
With artful Bluſhes to the Nuptial Bed.
This Picture, tho' in former Ages known,
Points out ſome Frailties which are ſtill our own:
The Wife of Bath *in our weak Wives we find;*
And Superſtition runs through all the Kind:
We but repeat our Grandſires Actions o'er,
And copy Follies which were theirs before.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

THE Toil of Wedlock five times bravely paſt,
You'll ſay, 'twas cruel to be baulk'd at laſt.
Grown old in Cupid's *Camp---long vers'd in Arms,*
I from my Youth have known the Pow'r of Charms:
Was I to ſingle Combat ever ſlow?
Did I e'er turn my Back upon the Foe?
Is this the Way old Service is rewarded,
And muſt the joyleſs Widow be diſcarded?
Stint me not, Love-----But while I yet ſurvive,
Throw in another Comfort to the Five.
Bleſs me!-----When I reflect on former Days!
Youth can make Conqueſts ſev'ral thouſand Ways;
I danc'd, I ſung, I ſmil'd,----I look'd demure,
And caught each Lover with a diff'rent Lure:
In frequent Wedlock join'd, was Woman ſtill,
And bow'd ſubſervient Husbands to my Will.
If Reaſon governs Man's ſuperior Mind,
A ready Cunning prompts the Female Kind.
Then learn from me-----So, Hymen *bleſs your Lives,*
Preſerve the juſt Prerogative of Wives;
Know to command each Look, each Tear, each Smile;
With Eyes, and Face, and Tongue, and Heart beguile:
Ev'n he that loves in Search of Game to roam,
By feign'd Reprizals may be kept at Home.
When-ever Heav'n was pleas'd to take my Spouſe,
I never pin'd on Thought of former Vows;
'Tis true, I ſigh'd, I wept, I ſobb'd at firſt,
And tore my Hair-----as decent Widows-----muſt:
But ſoon another Husband dry'd mine Eyes;
My Life, my Dear!---ſupply'd the Place of Sighs:
Amidſt continual Love I've reliſh'd Life,
A forward Maid, and a triumphant Wife.
Then grant, O Cupid, *this my lateſt Pray'r,*
If no kind Husband will relieve my Care;
Since Inclination yet out-lives my Face,
At leaſt indulge me with a Coup de Grace.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

PLOWDON,	Mr. *Boheme.*
Sir HARRY GAUNTLET,	Mr. *Ryan.*
DOGGRELL,	Mr. *Chapman.*
MERIT,	Mr. *Milward.*
HUBERT,	Mr. *Hall.*
ASTROLABE,	Mr. *Ogden.*
GRIST,	Mr. *Hippeſley.*
SPIGOT,	Mr. *Hulett.*
SHIPMAN,	Mr. *Ray.*

WOMEN.

MYRTILLA,	Mrs. *Younger.*
FLORINDA,	Mrs. *Templer.*
ALISON,	Mrs. *Egleton.*
BUSY,	Mrs. *Cantrel.*

SCENE.

An Inn on the Road between London *and* Canterbury.

THE WIFE of *BATH.*

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room.

Plowdon, Doggrell.

Plowd. Bud! what matter is it though you have never ſeen her? Was you not left wholy to my care? Am I not your Guardian? 'Tis a match that I think proper for you. Is it not ſufficient that ſhe is my daughter?

Dogg. But conſider, Sir; I am but juſt come from the Univerſity, where I have only convers'd with the Muſes, and I would willingly ſtudy mankind a little before I ſettle.

Plowd. Have you ſtole a marriage in the College with your laundreſs, Puppy? for there can be no other objection.

Dogg. But how can I know whether I ſhall like her, or how can you know whether ſhe will like me?

Plowd. I like it; and that is ſufficient. I ſpeak with the authority of a Father to both of you. Since thou haſt been dabbling in Poetry, to be ſure nothing leſs than a Goddeſs will ſerve thy turn. Let me tell you, *Frank*, a rich Yeoman of *Kent*'s daughter will make a much better wife than *Venus*.

Dogg. But had my Father been alive, he wou'd have inſiſted upon blood, Sir; upon a family.

Plowd. Is that the point then? In troth, a ſtanch country Yeoman, and an honeſt healthy country Laſs, may raiſe as good a breed as a Lady and a Valet de Chambre, though her Lord have faith and fondneſs enough to own himſelf the father.

Dogg. But I would fain have time to conſider of this matter; for the *D'Ogrelles*——

Plowd. Prithee, *Frank*, don't talk to me of the *D'Ogrelles*. Thy Grandfather's name was *Doggrell*, and thy Father's name was *Doggrell*; and when my daughter loſes the name of *Plowdon*, ſhe will be Mrs. *Doggrell*. Indeed ſhe will, *Frank*.

Dogg. Pardon me, Sir; the name is originally *French*, and is written with an apoſtrophe; as much as to ſay, *De Ogrelle*, which was the ancient manſion ſeat of the family.

Plowd. Have done, Boy. I'll hear no more of theſe fooleries. We are now about the midway to *Canterbury*, and within a dozen miles of my houſe; to-morrow we ſhall leave the Pilgrims, and ſtrike off on the left-hand road. Such a merry company ſure never met together! And if it were not upon your account, Boy, I ſhould turn Pilgrim too, and they would draw me on with 'em to *Canterbury*. But we ſhould go to 'em; they will expect us.

SCENE II.

Plowdon, Hubert.

Plowd. WHERE in all this hurry, Father? A word with you. By his haſte one would think ſupper was upon the table. But, in troth, Father, you ſhall ſtay with me one minute. What hath put you in all this buſtle?

Hub. A

Hub. A marriage, my good Mr. *Plowdon*; and I am afraid, ſhould I ſtay a minute, the parties may not continue of the ſame mind; or they may agree between 'em to diſpenſe with the ceremonies of the Church, and I would not be the occaſion of ſin. They are both in ſo much haſte, that I am ſure neither of 'em were ever married before. Poor things, they don't know what they are about to undertake!

Plowd. Is there a Match then ſtruck up among the Pilgrims?

Hub. No, no; they are all ſo merry within, that one may ſwear not one of them is thinking of matrimony. There is a Lady going to profeſs herſelf a Nun, who hath juſt now join'd them; and the Wife of *Bath* is ſo talkative, and ſo carnal, that unleſs I return to the Lady with eccleſiaſtical perſuaſives immediately, I am afraid ſhe will joke her out of her reſolution. She is rich, it ſeems, and hath much to beſtow on the Convent. You ſee I muſt go---But hold---Mr. *Plowdon*, if you are going to join the Pilgrims, this room would be convenient for the ceremony.

Enter a Footman.

Footman. Sir, my maſter hath ſent me all over the houſe to look for you; he grows wond'rous impatient; and if you were not to be found, he hath order'd me to call the Curate, and ſo you will loſe a good perquiſite.

Hub. You will oblige us then, Mr. *Plowdon*, with your abſence. You may tell your maſter, I am here alone, and ready to obey his commands. Sir, your ſervant.

[*Exit* Footman.

Plowdon. Curioſity will perſuade me to ſtay to have a peep at this ceremony; ſo I will only ſtep out of the way that I may not be obſerv'd. [*Exit* Plowdon.

Hub. This ſeems to be an uncanonical kind of a buſineſs, and to be ſure requires the moſt canonical kind of a reward. But I will ask no queſtions, and ſuppoſe it juſt and regular, that I may not give offence to my own ſcrupulous conſcience. If we did not now and then connive at an affair of this kind, matrimony would be nothing but a bargain and ſale between Parents: And for the propagation of mankind, we ſhould allow the world once a year, or ſo, to ſee a happy marriage to induce others to the hazardous undertaking.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Merit, *Florinda*, mask'd. *Hubert*, *Footmen*.

Merit. NOw, Father, to your office.

Hub. Does the lady aſſent?

Flor. With all my heart.

Merit. Well then, to the ceremony.

Hub. But let us firſt ſecure the door, that we be not interrupted. And now, Madam, I muſt beg you to take off that mask, that I may be able to atteſt what I am going about. You will pardon me, Sir, for it may be neceſſary. By my fay, ſhe hath a face worthy a nunnery, it might afford a pleaſant and delightful proſpect for eccleſiaſtical contemplation. But, alack-a-day, the good things of this world are not for us! Well; now I am ready for you.

Plowd. Open the door; open the door; I forbid the marriage, I forbid the marriage. [*Knocking without.*

Merit. Never heed it, Father; begin; diſpatch.

Plowd. Break open the door. Break it open, I ſay.

[*Knocking and hammering, the doors forc'd open.*

SCENE IV.

Merit, *Florinda*, *Hubert*, *Footman*, *Plowdon*, *Spigot*, *Drawers*.

Flor. HAh! my Father!

Plowd. Thank my ſtars, I came juſt in the nick! There is as yet no harm done; unleſs they have begun at the fag-end of the ceremony. How, gipſy! what, without your Father's conſent! and let me tell you, Father, ſuch as you diſgrace the Church when you connive at, nay, promote the diſobedience of children to their Parents. —— And as for you, Sir, tho' I have got my daughter again, I will have you ſecur'd till I know who you are.

Merit.

Merit. Indeed, Sir, you came very opportunely, for now, I hope to have the ſanction of your conſent. I expected you, Sir, at this Inn, or I had not brought her hither.

Plowd. And bolted the door upon me, as the moſt ready way to get the ſanction of my conſent! Into what impudent hands is ſhe fallen! you are a raſcal, Sirrah.

Merit. By the ill language you give me, one would think you really were, or intended to be my Father: With this Lady's conſent I ſhall allow you that privilege.

Plowd. Keep upon your knees, huſſy, for I have not done with you yet. Are your ſilver tankard and ſpoons ſafe? Secure him, Landlord; for by his aſſurance he is a highwayman to be ſure!

Spigot. No ſuch matter, indeed, Mr. *Plowdon.* He's my cuſtomer, and I know him to be a worthy, honeſt, ſenſible Gentleman, for he pays the handſomeſt reckonings without any deductions. He hath the air of a man of Quality, you may impoſe upon him as you think fit; he is above finding you out. No doubt, he muſt have had a very genteel education. [*To* Plowdon *aſide.*

Plowd. Why, wench, you look as eaſy as if you had no concern in this affair.

Flor. How can I look otherways, when I am under my Father's protection?

Plowd. What a profligate age are we arriv'd at! when daughters think they have a right to diſpoſe of themſelves in marriage! Here's a wench now, who can ſcarce caſt up an account of pounds, ſhillings, and pence, takes upon her to drive a bargain for ten thouſand pounds! Why, huſſy, in diſpoſing of yourſelf, I warrant you have never conſider'd that you were putting out ten thouſand pounds of your Father's money.

Flor. I know my duty, Sir; but how could I help myſelf? He ſtole me as I was walking in the meadow near our houſe, and by violence brought me away hither: he threaten'd me, and would have forc'd me to his arms; and what, alas, can weak woman do when men are ſo reſolute?

Hubert. Not an equivocation! nay, by the utmoſt extent that I allow myſelf, I cannot trace her mental reſervation! [*Aſide.*

Merit.

Merit. So then I find I am given up on all ſides! What can ſhe drive at! the ſtep ſhe took with me was beyond the practice of a Coquet, and yet the moſt conſummate one of 'em all could not ſacrifice a Lover with more eaſe. Sure, there is not ſo much difference in women as I imagin'd! [*Aſide.*

Plowd. This may be all falſe, huſſy, and I ſhall not truſt to thoſe ſmooth looks; but get you up, for you ſhall tell no more lyes upon your knees. I have taken my reſolutions. Since this kidnapper, Girl, hath ſet your inclinations agog, I have a husband of my own providing ready to lay 'em. You may remember, Child, I have talk'd to you of Mr. *Doggrell*: —— Let us have no fiddle faddle; what you call, conſideration now. I ſhall forgive you too, father *Hubert*, when you have done this job for me.

Hubert. Bleſs me, Sir, —— If I had known ſhe had been your daughter —— But I never ſaw her, you know, till now; for ſince I have been acquainted in your family you have kept her all along at the Boarding-School, and I have been abſent from this country ever ſince you took her home.

Plowd. Mr. *Doggrell*, Girl, is a very pretty fellow.

Flor. He's at *Oxford*, Sir, —— and I am not in ſuch haſte: I would not interrupt his ſtudies.

Plowd. But I would interrupt your projects, huſſy. I have brought him down with me, wench, and I will have no demurs. The jealouſy of a Father for a marriageable daughter is inſupportable; I ſhall never be eaſy till I have ſhifted it off upon an husband. Where is *Frank* now? Why is he out of the way? I would get rid of my daughter, I would get rid of my care this inſtant. I'll croſs-examine them, to be ſure that I am not impos'd upon. Get you into that cloſet, Gipſy, and ſtay there till I call you.

Hubert. Really, if it were conſiſtent with our duty, one would forſwear the function of the matrimonial office; we ſo very ſeldom perform it to the ſatisfaction of all parties.

SCENE

SCENE V.

Plowdon, Hubert, Merit, Footmen, Spigot, Drawers, Myrtilla, Aliſon. [Myrtilla *veil'd.*]

Aliſon. HEy-day! what is the meaning of all this uproar?

Plowd. The company are breaking in upon us. Conduct him into the other room. I'll be with you immediately, and examine this affair thoroughly. The Wife of *Bath* will talk, and I hate to be interrupted. Take notice, Landlord, I leave this impudent fellow in your cuſtody. Then *Frank* too, Father, muſt have ſome preparatory diſcourſe before he ſees my daughter, or I ſhall have demurs and objections from that quarter too. I will talk to you, Father *Hubert*, upon that head by and by.

SCENE VI.

Plowdon, Aliſon, Myrtilla.

Aliſon. WHat hath diſcompos'd you, my good Maſter *Plowdon*? Hath the wench of the Inn ſwore a rape againſt you? Believe me, old gray-beard, it cannot turn out to your diſparagement. It will do you credit, if you have views of a ſecond wife.

Plowd. I know, dame *Aliſon*, it will be in vain to make my complaints to you upon this article; for the wife of *Bath* was always a zealous advocate for the liberties of women.

Aliſon. And with very good reaſon, in troth; when every man alive is invading them! every husband would be a *Cæſar*, if they did not now and then meet with a ſtubborn *Cato* of a wife. But prithee, *Plowdon*, let me know after all, what is the matter?

Plowd. I have a daughter, dame.

Aliſon. One would have thought by the hurly-burly we over-heard, it could have been with no body but your wife. But what hath your daughter done? where is ſhe?

Plowd.

Plowd. Pouting, and plotting againſt her father in yonder cloſet.

Aliſon. How came ſhe hither?

Plowd. That fellow, that raſcal I ſent out as you came in, (if you will take her word) ſtole her from my houſe, and brought her hither; and if I had not come upon her juſt in the nick, father *Hubert* would have given the thief a right and title to her.

Aliſon. And ſo you would hang him! let him upon all accounts marry her. How long hath he had her in poſſeſſion? perhaps you have only prevented the ceremony. You had better huddle up the marriage, indeed you had; it may prove more for her's and your own credit; for, idad, he is a ſightly young fellow.

Plowd. I have a husband ready for her, dame. Mr. *Doggrell*, the young gentleman you ſaw with me is the man I have pitch'd upon; ſo that as to a man you ſee the girl hath met with no diſappointment.

Aliſon. There you are out, Mr. *Plowdon*. Let men ſay what they will, women do like one man better than another; look round among the husbands of your acquaintance, and you will find I tell you truth. Why, marriage would be a contented ſtate, and cuckoldom out of faſhion, if all men were alike to us.

Plowd. But, my dear dame, (ever ſet a woman to watch a woman) ſhall I leave her under your care, till I have diſpatch'd this affair? You can never think the girl hardly uſed, for I have provided her a young husband; and that he hath an eſtate can be no objection; your prudent women, who think before they marry, marry for nothing elſe. Talk over the affair with her, my good dame, in your own way, and as ſoon as I have let *Frank* into the matter, I ſhall deſire your company at the wedding. I muſt now go to the examination of my priſoner.---- But I don't ſee why I ſhould truſt any woman; ſo, for ſecurity, I'll lock the door.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

Myrtilla, Aliſon.

Aliſ. YOu ſee, Madam, here is a woman acting like a woman; with the ſpirit of intrigue, and at the ſame time with the ſpirit of diſobedience. Why, in the name of *Cupid*, a Nunnery, Madam? 'Tis hard, I grant you, in marriage, to ſwear that you will like only one man; but ſure it is harder to ſwear you will never like any man at all. Now, I fairly confeſs, as to man, I cannot anſwer for my own thoughts four and twenty hours together.

Myrt. As I am convinc'd, Madam, marriage is not to be my deſtiny, I had better ſeclude my ſelf from the ſolicitation.

Aliſ. Why is it not your deſtiny? do you never think of a man? do you never talk of a man? do you never dream of a man? Sure, girl, you would not be an imperfect creature all your life! gracious! A Nunnery! it makes one's blood run cold: But your blood muſt run cold, or you never could take ſuch an un-woman-like reſolution.

Myrt. Some are allotted to one ſtate, others to another; and there is no oppoſing fatality.

Aliſ. I dare ſay, *Plowdon*'s daughter within is of another mind: Let us hear her ſtory and her opinion upon this ſubject. [*Ex.* Aliſon.

Myrt. While we are in the world, 'tis hard to diſengage our ſelves from the thoughts of it. Every woman is another's tempter; by their converſation they warm one another into wiſhes, and encourage and aſſiſt one another in the riſques of intrigue. At my return from my pilgrimage to *Canterbury*, I am determin'd, the walls of a Nunnery (whatever be my thoughts) ſhall be a guard upon my actions; ſince I am convinc'd that the ſtars have decreed me to a ſingle life.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

Aliſon, Florinda, Myrtilla.

Aliſ. WELL, Girl, ſince your Father hath carried off your man, for your comfort and revenge, here is a ſiſter ready to introduce you to a Nunnery. To be ſure you are ready for the moſt deſperate undertaking, to croſs the old peeviſh Put, your Father!

Myrt. Florinda! my dear child, I have not ſeen you theſe three years, never ſince we lay in the ſame bed-chamber at the Boarding-School.

Flor. Myrtilla! Are you in maſquerade? I hope, my dear, this habit does not really belong to you.

Myrt. At my return from *Canterbury* you may ſee me profeſs'd. The world is not for me, ſo I have choſen the prudent part, to retire from it.

Aliſ. 'Tis her deſtiny, forſooth, that hath thrown this lot for her.

Flor. She was always a ſuperſtitious Girl, but I never thought ſhe would have run this length. Here my Father now is contradicting my ſtars, and diſappointing me of a husband; but for all that I am ſtill determin'd, that my deſtiny ſhall be my own choice. Now I love contradiction ſo heartily, that I ſhould even have a pleaſure in contradicting the ſtars.

Aliſ. But let me into your affair, Child; for in your circumſtance you may want a friend; and I ever chuſe to take the part of love.

Flor. I rely upon your honour, Ladies. You muſt know then, my Father hath choſen a husband for me, and I have choſen one for my ſelf: Now the diſpute between us is, whether I ſhall take the man that he likes, or the man that I like: A common caſe between fathers and daughters.

Aliſ. And ſo, Child, you were ſtolen with your own conſent.

Flor. Very true. I took the opportunity of my Father's abſence, to eſcape from home with the man I am determin'd to marry; and when I was juſt upon the point of it, unluckily fell into my Father's hands. That I might be leſs ſuſpected, and have the more liberty, I have denied all this, and accuſed my lover of having ſtolen me.

Aliſ.

Aliſ. Here is one man, 'tis plain, muſt be diſappointed, unleſs you or I take compaſſion on him. Really, Madam, I ſhould think you ought to do a leſs raſh thing, to prevent your doing a greater. [*to* Myrt.---But all this affair, girl, muſt ſoon be unravel'd, for your father, with the husband of his providing, will be here immediately; and then nothing but obſtinacy and diſobedience can ſave you. [*to* Flor.

Flor. I have that ready at worſt. 'Tis now, *Myrtilla*, in your power to give me proof of your friendſhip. You ſee my Stars deſtine me to marriage; if you will lend me your habit to eſcape to my lover, and remain in my place, I ſhall owe my future happineſs to you. I hope you will not deny me.

Aliſ. As you can have no deſign upon her man, 'tis a very reaſonable requeſt; her thought is ſo right that you cannot refuſe her. If women ſcruple to help one another, how can love go on. ---- Step into the cloſet, chickens, and prepare matters, leſt *Plowdon* return before ſhe is ready.

Myrt. My friendſhip can deny you nothing; yet I wiſh this requeſt had never been made to me. But I will undergo the anger and reproaches of your father, to procure the happineſs of a friend.

[*Exeunt* Florinda *and* Myrtilla.

Aliſ. Ah! *Cupid*, were I rewarded for all my ſervices, thou oweſt me many a good turn. I have had ſome love, 'tis true; but then I have run the riſque of a few husbands for it; they indeed had their croſſes, for I was always a woman of ſpirit. I ſhall be abus'd; I ſhall be call'd bawd for this affair, to be ſure; and what then? If a woman is a bawd for friendly connivance, where ſhall we find a woman of unſpotted reputation? If you invite a lady to ſupper, would you be ſo ill-bred not to invite her friend? At a party of cards, would you not make it agreeable by engaging her friend? At a ball, you would not ſure let a lady want her friend for a partner? and at a play, you would ſqueeze cloſe to make room for a friend between you? Well; if friendſhip and good offices be ſins, my acquaintance know I have many to anſwer for! So, here come my girls. This is well done, child; now you have got rid of the habit, I hope you have thrown aſide the reſolution,

and that you will never take it up again; break it girl, for, o' my word, 'tis not worth the keeping.

Flor. For this favour, *Myrtilla*, I ſhall be ever indebted to you, and I hope my happineſs in marriage will perſuade you to follow my example.

Aliſon. Here's a Girl now of a true female ſpirit, one half love and t'other half contradiction. Which is the greateſt pleaſure? By my fay, I would not be without either of them; but when they are together, without doubt it gives love the more agreeable reliſh.

Flor. My whole ſcheme is diſappointed at once. What ſhall I do? the door is lock'd, [*peeping*] and my Father coming with the young fellow with him! Run into the cloſet this inſtant, *Myrtilla*, I beg it of you.

SCENE IX.

Florinda, Aliſon, Plowdon, Doggrell.

Plowd. SInce I have got my daughter again, I was determin'd to get that affair firſt off my hands; ſo I have deferr'd the examination of the raſcal, and left him without in the cuſtody of my Landlord; for perhaps it will not be prudent to make too ſtrict a ſcrutiny into this matter till the marriage is over.

Aliſon. Poh, poh, let him go. The man hath his mare again, and what would you have more?

Plowd. But in what diſpoſition, dame, did you find *Florinda*?

Aliſon. Sullen, Sir; very ſullen.

Plowd. Ay, ay; there muſt be more in this matter than appears at preſent. But, a-lack-a-day, did not I leave father *Hubert* with you? What is become of him?

Aliſon. He went out with you; we have not ſeen him ſince you left us.

Plowd. In troth, this is very unlucky; for I ſhall be confoundedly uneaſy till this buſineſs is over.—Prithee, *Frank*, will you try what you can do with her? the Dame here ſhall introduce you, and ſpeak a good word for you. In the mean time I will look out for father *Hubert*.

Flor. My preſence ſhall be no reſtraint upon their courtſhip. You will find me, Madam, among the Pilgrims.

SCENE

SCENE X.

Aliſon, Doggrell.

Dogg. WHat can Mr. *Plowdon* mean by all this haſte? I have never ſeen his daughter, and I am not fond of the alliance.

Aliſon. Then ſhe will be quite new to you; and without doubt you have good taſte enough to like a new face. But I ſuppoſe you intend to know the life of a fine Gentleman, and run helter-skelter among the ſex before you ſettle. There is courage in that way of life, I grant you; but, idad, it may ſpoil the breed of your family.

Dogg. This too would at once cut ſhort all the gallantries of my Poetry; I deſign'd, like other Poets, to have had a hundred imaginary miſtreſſes before I had one real one.

Aliſon. The girl ſhall not raviſh you. Curioſity ſhould perſuade you to ſee her. Why, ſure, Stripling, you are not afraid of a woman! ſhe is no old maid, I can aſſure you, and is not of that deſperate time of life to take the firſt man that falls in her way——*Florinda.*

SCENE XI.

Aliſon, Doggrell, Myrtilla.

Aliſon. GIve me leave, Madam, to introduce Mr. *Doggrell* to you; the Gentleman your Father deſigns for your husband.

Myrt. As a ſtranger he claims my civility: But ſure no well-bred man would be guilty of the rudeneſs to marry a Lady againſt her inclinations; beſides, ſhould the wife reſent, you know, Madam, it in time may make the match very diſagreeable to him.

Dogg. 'Tis, I confeſs, a kind of rape for life.

Aliſon. And, ifackins, 'tis in a wife's power to prove it a moſt conſpicuous capital offence.

Dogg. Who could have imagin'd that old *Put*'s daughter could be half ſo agreeable! ſo well-bred! ſo like a gentlewoman! I hope, Madam, 'twas with your conſent your

father hath given me his; or at leaſt that you will have no objections to his choice.

Myrt. Though I had none, undoubtedly you muſt have many. Would you marry the woman who would be married to any man at firſt ſight? You are a ſtranger, Sir; is it poſſible I can have thought of you in the view of a huſband?----I am certain, every man of ſenſe muſt be diſguſted with a woman that could be ſo forward to ſeem to liſten to a propoſal of this kind.

Dogg. Why, really, Madam, ſince I have ſeen you, all my objections are anſwer'd; and I muſt acquaint you, your Father grows outrageous upon the leaſt hint of delay. He hath conſented, and I conſent.

Myrt. Diſobedience then defend me! I ſhall give you leave to viſit me.

Dogg. Your father may diſpoſe of me; I ſhall implicitly obey his commands.

Myrt. What! take the advantage of an arbitrary Father! No civility before marriage! I ſee what I am to expect. If you will allow me conſideration, I do not give you an abſolute refuſal; and I think this is too much encouragement for a firſt viſit. Now you know my mind.

Aliſon. You ſhould always let a woman comply with you in her own way. This hurry and haſte might do with a widow who knows what ſhe is about; but your maiden is a timorous kind of creature; let her have her humour for a day or two, ſhe will grow more familiar and tame to you by degrees.

Dogg. I cannot, Madam, for my heart, refuſe Mr. *Plowdon*'s offer.

Myrt. But I can.

Dogg. I muſt be content then, Madam, to take you in his way.

Myrt. And I muſt be content to refuſe you in my own. The fellow grows impudent. I ſhall hate you.

Dogg. I know my ſelf, Madam, and I ſhall venture that.

Myrt. Moſt audacious! You have already the inſolence of an ill-bred husband; I'll hear no more; I'll make no reply; I have an anſwer ready for my father that ſhall ſerve for both of you.

[Myrtilla *ſits, and leans in a melancholy Poſture.*

Aliſon.

Aliſon. Ay, the ſpleen! over-run with the ſpleen! Woman is ſo weak that ſhe muſt have her own way.

SCENE XII.

Myrtilla, Aliſon, Doggrell, Plowdon, Hubert.

Plowd. Well, *Frank*, what think you of the girl now you have ſeen her? Whether you like her or no, you ſhall have her; ſo you may ſpeak your mind.

Dogg. Why, really, Sir, the objections now are all on her ſide, mine were all remov'd at ſight.

Plowd. Hold up your head, huſſy, and look chearful. Take her by the hand, *Frank*. ---- How, huſſy! won't you give the gentleman your hand when I bid you?

Myrt. No.

Hub. Will you conſent, fair lady, that I join your hands?

Myrt. No.

Plowd. Is this language to a Father? Comply this inſtant, gipſy, or you will provoke me.

Myrt. I won't.

Plowd. You won't! Down upon your knees, you poſitive ſlut; down, I ſay. Furies! who have we here? What have you done with my daughter?

Aliſon. Ha, ha, ha; only a little innocent mummery! You will perſuade us then you did not know her in the Nun's habit when ſhe went out of the room with you: The Lady, and ſhe, and I had a mind to divert you. Don't be concern'd, your daughter will not turn Nun in earneſt. ----'Twas only a frolick, indeed 'twas only a frolick.

Plowd. Let me go----let me go----You are her accomplices, all of you.

Aliſon. Hold him, father *Hubert*. Talk to him, Father, of the ſin of anger; 'tis your duty to prevent tranſgreſſion.

Myrt. My friendſhip hath engag'd me too far in this worldly affair; I grow ſcandalous to myſelf. I cannot bear to expoſe my ſelf any longer out of my character. [*Aſide.*

Dogg. I knew by her behaviour ſhe muſt be a woman of faſhion. I have now the ſtrongeſt reaſon in the world to have nothing to do with that old fellow's daughter.

[*Aſide.*] I hope, Madam, my love will have intereſt enough to prevail with you never to put on that habit again. —— There is nothing like perſeverance; ſo, I'll follow her.

[*Ex.* Myrtilla *and* Doggrell.

SCENE XIII.

Plowdon, Aliſon, Hubert.

Hub. I Dare not truſt a madman.

Plowd. Pimp, Pandar!

Hub. Indeed, Mr. *Plowdon,* I dare not.

Plowd. Bawd. You are a bawd.

Hub. Anger, Mr. *Plowdon,* hath been look'd upon, in all times, as a ſhort madneſs.

Plowd. Furies! Father, my daughter, I tell you, is run away.---And you, you bawd, would give her time for eſcape. Could I but get at my ſword! I ſhould have the murder of one or both of you to anſwer for.

Aliſ. Tie him, Father *Hubert.* Lend him your girdle a while: That rope may ſave him from a more fatal one.

Hub. He raves, indeed, of murder.

Aliſ. Cool him with ſome lenitive admonitions. ---More lenitives againſt the fatal conſequences of anger.

Plowd. Thank my ſtars; here comes my landlord with ſome of the pilgrims to my relief.

SCENE XIV.

Plowdon, Aliſon, Hubert, Spigot, Shipman.

Shipm. WHere's my maſter *Plowdon*? Idad, we have had a rare uproar upon your account yonder. ---- Your daughter was ſheering off under falſe colours, had not *Griſt* the miller laid an embargo upon her. What, I warrant, it was againſt your conſent, and ſhe had ſtole duty!

Plowd. My daughter! where is the jade? Help, releaſe me, unhand me. But pray, landlord, what have you done with the fellow I left in your cuſtody too?

Spig.

Spig. Since you had no more to ſay to him, all the buſineſs I had with him, was to receive his reckoning, and to wiſh him a good journey.

Plowd. That was not well done, landlord. Are you ſure, honeſt ſailor, that my daughter is ſafe?

Shipm. Griſt, you ſee yonder, is towing her hither. Idad, I believe the little runner would fain be adrift again.

SCENE XV.

Plowdon, Hubert, Aliſon, Spigot, Shipman, Griſt, Florinda, &c.

Plowd. BY my troth, that *Griſt* is a very honeſt fellow; I would truſt him with any thing but my corn. Neighbour *Griſt,* this was kindly done of you. But how could you find her out through this diſguiſe?

Griſt. A man who hath kept a mill is frequented by ſo many women, that he muſt know ſomething of their ways. The moſt mealy-mouth'd of 'em all can never impoſe upon me; for you muſt know, I always ſuſpect a woman. She offer'd money to the ſailor there, to give a letter to the young fellow that you left with my landlord. But, ifackins, the young woman begg'd ſo pitifully, that if your honour had not been my good cuſtomer, I ſhould not have baulk'd her fancy.

Aliſ. Without doubt theſe young ſlippery flirts have a pleaſure in impoſing upon us old folks.

Plowd. I ſhall forgive you every thing, Girl, provided you will now chearfully finiſh this Affair. Come, I know you will be good. Comply with your Father for this once; after you are married, you may divert your ſelf with diſobedience: I have had my ſhare of your perverſeneſs already. This good company, Father *Hubert,* ſhall be witneſſes of the marriage; and then we'll ſend and invite the reſt of the pilgrims, and make a merry night of it. Every thing, you find, Mr. *Doggrell,* is at laſt agreed upon. Give my daughter your hand. What a-vengeance, gone! Now 'tis his turn to run away. If they had been married theſe ten years,

they could not keep more opportunely out of one another's way. Furies, this is not to be born!

Alis. Another fit! Good-lack-a-day! If his fits come ſo quick upon him, it muſt end in bleeding and confinement.

Shipm. Now, to my thinking, you are all very hard upon the gentleman, that you won't let him eaſe his mind by a few oaths or ſo. If our boatſwain did not every now and then give his paſſion vent that way, o' my conſcience, he would burſt.

Griſt. Why ſhould we hinder my maſter *Plowdon*? Let him have the full ſcope of his paſſion; it may do him good: We need none of us mind it.

Plowd. Since things will not go as I would have them, I'll have all the ſecurity I can. I'll lock you, wench, into your room for this night. You ſhall faſt, huſſy; for theſe gadding tricks of yours require mortification.

Alis. The old fellow had as good give up this affair; the girl hath a ſpirit, and will bring her matters to bear at laſt: Indeed ſhe will, Father. You have heard confeſſions, and I know you muſt be of my opinion. Troth, I think women are in the right of it, not to be over-ready in taking advice. Every fool can give advice, every Quack can give phyſick; but who will take it? Good counſel now and then works upon us; and what can men boaſt of more? We are not ſo unreaſonable.

The beſt Advice comes ſometimes out of ſeaſon;
When Reaſon's on our Side, we ſide with Reaſon.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Myrtilla, Aliſon, Buſy.

Aliſon. GRacious! a Nun at theſe years! and with ſo much beauty! what a degenerate age are we arriv'd at! Fie, Madam, fie! 'tis for ſuch things as you to be uſeful in your generation. All your five ſenſes about you, and not one ſpark of love! a-lack and well-a-day, the true breed of womankind is no more! Let me die, if I do not think it unnatural! there cannot be ſuch difference in conſtitutions; by my fay, girl, 'tis impoſſible. Look ye, my dear, if you are ſet upon confinement and diſcipline, I would infallibly adviſe you to a husband. Give any husband but his head, and I'll promiſe you enough of both of 'em to exerciſe any reaſonable woman's patience.

Myrt. When it is allotted by the ſtars that a perſon ſhall always remain in the ſingle ſtate, 'tis but common prudence to retire from the world.

Aliſon. The ſtars! a pretty impediment, truly! why, they are *Cupid*'s lamps, girl, and have ſerv'd to light many a lover to his miſtreſs. Believe me, child, ſtar-light hath been reckon'd the beſt love-light in all ages, and all countries; to my knowledge, they have been aiding, abetting, and aſſiſting to many an intrigue. Beſides, let your ſtar-gazers ſay what they will, I do not think it in the power of all the ſtars in the firmament to influence ſo tickliſh a thing as a woman's inclination.

Myrt.

Myrt. Sure, Madam, experience muſt have taught you to the contrary, and you cannot be ſuch an Infidel to call in queſtion the truth of judicial Aſtrology! my caſe too is very particular; for all the Aſtrologers that I was ever ſo unhappy as to conſult, hint at the ſame thing.

Aliſon. The only Planet that ſhould influence and govern me is the Moon, ever changing, and by that trick new every month.

Myrt. Beſides, Madam, every other thing concurs. I have try'd three *Midſummer*-Eves, and there hath not appear'd ſo much as the ſhadow of a man.

Aliſon. What ſignifies the ſhadow, when your Ladyſhip hath youth and beauty enough, at any time to command the ſubſtance?

Myrt. But it is my reſolution to retire.

Aliſon. Conſider, girl, that reſolution muſt be very raſh and deſperate, where even repentance can nothing avail. Let me look on your hand, honey. Bow your hand a little more. There, there; enough. As promiſing a hand as ever return'd a ſqueeze! Ay, look upon it yourſelf, my dear. Ods my life! there it is. That little forked line there! a manifeſt huſband. Let me ſee. Now, for children! children! gracious! as I live, three fine bouncing boys, and four girls! A woman that muſt have ſeven children, if ſhe would preſerve her character, muſt either turn prude, or get her a huſband.

Buſy. My Lady hath had many a good offer to be ſure, and ſhe need not drive matters to extremities.

Aliſon. And that mole there beneath the Tip of your right ear is a ſhrewd ſign —— I could tell you where you have another; but ſo much for that.

Buſy. Nay, Madam, now you muſt be convinc'd ſhe does know ſomething of the matter.

Aliſon. Look ye, my dear, thanks to my lucky planets, I have made a ſhift to diſpatch five good men already, and welcome the ſixth, ſay I! I fear him not. One, two, three, four, five; and here is another little tiny thing; if it will not reach to a husband, my life for it, my good management ſhall make it ſtretch to a fine hopeful gallant.

Buſy.

Buſy. Methinks one's natural inclination would induce one to try matrimony once purely for the ſake of novelty. Now I own I have curioſity.

Myrt. 'Tis not, dame, that I have the dread of matrimony before my eyes: As to the love of power, I feel I have the ſpirit of a woman; but really, dame, I queſtion your skill; you only amuſe and flatter me. Are you ſure this mark ſignifies a husband?

Aliſ. Am I ſure that I ever knew the comforts of one?

Buſy. Nay, Madam, the mark is as plain in your hand as in mine; and I have no doubts about the matter.

SCENE II.

Myrtilla, Aliſon, Buſy, Hubert.

Hub. NEver mind that carnal woman, Madam; her converſation is enough to ſtagger the moſt determin'd reſolution. She blows the coals of inclination. She is *Cupid*'s incendiary, and will talk up the coldeſt heart into a Flame. Let chaſtity, Madam, be your guard againſt this advocate for incontinence.

Aliſ. I am perſuading her to her duty, father. Was ſhe not born to multiply? anſwer me that.

Hub. But if her virtue is ſtrong enough to renounce the pleaſures of the world---- Marriage is only a kind of neceſſary indulgence for the weak and frail.

Aliſ. Heretical doctrine! What, ſpeak againſt the holy inſtitution of marriage, father!

Hub. You miſtake me, dame: To ſome women, (to ſuch conſtitutions as yours, I mean) I would inculcate matrimony; but at the ſame time, in others I would encourage devotion. You, ſuch as you, can have no notions of the contentment and ſweet Serenity of a Nunnery.

Aliſ. You plead for a Nunnery; I, for a husband. Let her hear the arguments on both ſides, and then chuſe. Sure a woman may loſe her liberty in the way that is the moſt agreeable to her.

Myrt. I can ſafely hear what ſhe hath to ſay, for my lot is already caſt.

Hub. Marriage, you know, dame, is for life----

Aliſ.

Alis. Hold, Father,---- So is a Convent.

Hub. With a man----

Alis. Without a man----

Hub. But you won't let me ſpeak. With a man whoſe temper may vary.

Alis. With a number of women, only women; whoſe tempers are all variable.

Hub. You are too quick upon me, Dame. The husband may be moroſe, may be jealous----

Alis. But then ſhe may have had the pleaſure of giving him occaſion.

Hub. The care of children---

Alis. The envying thoſe that have them.

Hub. The anxiety of domeſtick affairs----

Alis. The being always confin'd within the ſame walls---

Hub. Curtain-lectures----

Alis. No man to preach 'em to her----

Hub. The contradiction of a husband----

Alis. The contradiction of her own inclinations----

Hub. Secluded from all the cares of life----

Alis. And from all the pleaſures too----

Hub. No temptation----

Alis. To be come at----

Hub. The ſolitude--- the enjoying her own thoughts---

Alis. The nothing elſe to enjoy. The very worſt huſband promiſes better than all this. Why muſt you have a woman ſhut up with you? Have you not opportunities enough? Are you not frequently ſhut up with thoſe that are abroad?

Hub. You grow ſcandalous, woman. There is no bearing your diſcourſe.

Alis. But we have ſaid nothing of the comforts of matrimony all this while. The harmony, the friendſhip---

Hub. Of perpetually telling one another their faults, either imaginary or real ones.

Alis. A man always in your power.

Hub. You always in his.

Alis. You never were married, Father; and moſt married men know to the contrary. If ſhe were alone, I could ſay more to her; but I leave the reſt to her imagination---

Hub. Go, go, naughty woman; there is no talking with you upon this ſubject. I ſhall take another opportunity. By

pervert-

perverting my meaning, ſhe weakens all my arguments. Continue your reſolution, and think of a Nunnery.

Aliſon. And there have the perpetual torment of thinking and wiſhing for a husband. For the benefit of mankind, ſo fine a woman ſhould not be loſt.

Hub. You flatter her, you only flatter her, Dame *Aliſon.*

Aliſon. You inveigle her, you only inveigle her, Father *Hubert.*

Hub. What! arraign the admonitions of the church! You are carnal-minded, Dame; very carnal-minded.

Aliſon. One would think you were particularly ſo by your ſollicitations.

Hub. You are now too ſcurrilous. I ſhall excommunicate you, Dame *Aliſon!*

Aliſon. That you may do, but you ſhall never put me in a Convent; that I can tell you, Father *Hubert!*

Hub. In my next viſit, I hope I ſhall ſpeak my mind without all this impertinence, Dame *Aliſon!*

Aliſon: Impertinence! Give better language, or your cloth ſhall not protect you. Were you a woman, you durſt not have ſaid that to me, Father *Hubert!*

Myrt. Have done; I beg it of you; the diſpute is become too noiſy, and it grows late.

Hub. Scurrility! downright ſcurrility!——I'll diſappoint her, and put an end to her talk by removing the ſubject.

[*Exit.*

Aliſon. For want of a reply, becauſe you were driven down to foul language!----Was not I all along, Madam, in the right of it? I will not intrude upon your patience. Conſider what I have ſaid. 'Tis, I vow, a ſtrange thing our *Engliſh* Ladies ſhould be ſo backward in coming to knowledge. Why, an *Italian* Girl thinks at eleven, meditates at twelve, and ripens into perfection at thirteen; and here we ſhall have an aukward *Engliſh* Bride want advice on her wedding-day, though ſhe be not married till five and twenty. Go, make haſte to bed, child; think of the fortune I have told you, and dream of a husband.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Myrtilla, Buſy.

Myrt. IF it were not quite oppoſite to my ſtars, I ſhould juſt now be inclin'd to think the wife of *Bath* not ſo much in the wrong. Nay, now I recollect my ſelf, every thing hath not concurr'd againſt her; for you may remember, *Buſy*, I flung two husbands at the fortune-book about a year ago.

Buſy. Perfectly well, Madam.

Myrt. The laſt aſtrologer too I unluckily conſulted upon *Childermas-Day*, ſo that I could not poſſibly have any good fortune happen to me then.----- Ah! there is a pin with the point towards me! take it out of my ſight this inſtant.

Buſy. I wiſh your ladyſhip would not diſcompoſe your ſelf for ſuch trifles.

Myrt. 'Tis ſuch trifles as theſe that have warn'd me out of many inconveniences. If you had minded them too, it might have been much the better for you.

Buſy. Bleſs me! I have prick'd my finger.

Myrt. Thank my ſtars, the pin hath done its miſchief. I was indeed afraid it pointed at me. Confeſs fairly, *Buſy*; didſt thou ever in thy life ſpill ſalt without anger?

Buſy. I was always angry with my ſelf for ſpilling the ſalt.

Myrt. Thou wilt always, wench, be an unbeliever. But now I recollect too another favourable circumſtance: About a week ago, when I laid the bride-cake under my pillow, I dreamt of Sir *Harry Gauntlet*.

Buſy. Poor Sir *Harry Gauntlet!* 'Twas your cruel uſage ſent him a travelling.

Myrt. If any man could have prevail'd, I own it would have been him: But he hath had his abſolute refuſal.

Buſy. And ſo have many lovers who have ſucceeded.

Myrt. By this day's faſting I have prepar'd myſelf for one experiment more. What a-clock is it?

Buſy. Almoſt ten, Madam.

Myrt. This, I am reſolv'd, ſhall be the laſt trial: I go to make ready the Dumb-cake; 'tis St. *Agnes*'s night, and the hour approaches; now don't you be out of the way, *Buſy*. [*Exit.* Myrtilla.

Buſy.

Buſy. How ſtrong muſt be her ſuperſtition, when it can prevail againſt her inclination! it hath forc'd this Nunnery upon her. Why is ſhe ſo ſet upon a Nunnery? it cannot be the diſcontent of poverty, for ſhe is rich. It cannot be diſappointed love, for ſhe may have her choice. She is not made a ſacrifice to the avarice of a Parent, for ſhe is an orphan. Superſtition, in ſhort, hath got the better of the woman, and ſhe implicitly gives up the pleaſures of her youth to her credulity. Bleſs me! it is impoſſible, it cannot be him, Sir *Harry Gauntlet.*

SCENE IV.

Buſy, Sir *Harry Gauntlet.*

Sir *Harry.* WHat! turn'd pilgrim, my Girl! I was very luckily a day or two ago inform'd of *Myrtilla*'s reſolution.

Buſy. But, dear Sir *Harry*, how long have you been return'd from your travels?

Sir *Harry.* But a very few days; and as much in love as ever. My paſſion was beyond the cure of abſence, and I could like no woman, but as ſhe more or leſs put me in mind of *Myrtilla.*

Buſy. Her heart is fortified by ſuperſtition; the ſtars oppoſe you, and the planets fight againſt you: In ſhort, ſhe hath nothing weak about her but her inclination.

Sir *Harry.* Am I quite forgot, Mrs. *Buſy?*

Buſy. You have ſaid ſo many fine things to her, that ſhe muſt have a very bad memory, or very little vanity, if ſhe does not remember ſome of them.

Sir *Harry.* Do you think no man whatever could divert her from this rath extravagant project?

Buſy. There are queſtions not proper to be anſwer'd. Confidents, Sir, muſt not divulge ſecrets.

Sir *Harry.* Am I come ſo opportunely to thy relief, when thou haſt ſo uneaſy a thing as a ſecret within thee?

Buſy. We are not ſo communicative as you imagine. A woman, Sir, always ſets the true value upon a ſecret; for ſhe never tells it but to her beſt Friends.

Sir *Harry.* But a ſecret of this conſequence! You ſee, I dare truſt you with one firſt. [*Gives her money.*

Buſy.

Buſy. When a gentleman is ſo open, he always draws one in to talk freely in return. You know, Sir, my lady is as ſuperſtitious as an ignorant doating abbeſs: Her humour by day depends upon her dreams by night; ſpilling ſalt throws her into the vapours; ſhe loſes half the week upon the ſcore of unlucky days, and from her cradle ſhe hath had an implicit confidence in all aſtrologers. 'Tis thoſe illiterate fellows that have put this thing in her head.

Sir *Harry.* And ſo your lady, to prove thoſe fools in the right, hath reſolv'd to prove her ſelf all her life in the wrong! If ſuperſtition did not give up common ſenſe, aſtrology would ſoon loſe all its credit.

Buſy. She juſt now indeed was a little wavering. The wife of *Bath* is but this moment gone from her; with her merry tattling way, ſhe almoſt laugh'd her out of her project, and my lady, to my thinking, ſeem'd to feel her converſation. My good dame, I ſhould have told you, conſulted her hand, and (in all appearance, much to her ſatisfaction) contradicted all her former fortune by a promiſe of a husband.

Sir *Harry.* There lies the judgment of an aſtrologer. His predictions always prove true, when he foretels that a woman will do what ſhe likes.

Buſy. The thing at preſent is ſo far undetermin'd, that this being St. *Agnes*'s night, ſhe hath, in all the forms, prepar'd the Dumb-Cake; and 'tis my opinion, her imagination is ſo warm, that it will deceive her into an agreeable viſion of the man ſhe hath in her head, and then, Nunnery, adieu!

Sir *Harry.* The moſt lucky incident in the world! Approaches, by the way of her ſuperſtition, cannot fail of ſucceſs. With your aſſiſtance, Mrs. *Buſy*, to-night I'll play the apparition.

Buſy. Juſt my thought, I vow. I always had a very good opinion of you, Sir *Harry.* Exactly at twelve. Remember the hour. The key of my room, through the cloſet, will let you into hers. You ſee I would go great lengths to contribute to my Lady's happineſs. I know ſhe is now expecting me, and company I ſee is coming in upon us. Go with me, and ſee me go in, that you may know where to find my room again. I ſhall expect you before twelve.

SCENE

SCENE V.

Merit, *Spigot*.

Spigot. IN troth, Mr. *Merit*, you are ſo very much diſguis'd, that I can ſcarcely believe my own eyes. You could not be known by your moſt intimate acquaintance. Believe me, Sir, you may ſafely go among any company in the houſe without the leaſt ſuſpicion.

Merit. You deliver'd my letter, you ſay.

Spigot. Do you doubt me, Sir? As to thoſe kind of affairs, leave me alone to ſerve a good cuſtomer. Why, Sir, I was bred up a drawer in *London*, and if I had not turn'd my hand to this ſort of buſineſs, how think you I got wherewithal to ſet up an Inn? When he call'd for a freſh bottle, I took the opportunity, and while I gave him the glaſs with one hand, I gave her the letter with t'other. Maſter *Plowdon* makes but ſparing reckonings, and it would be no great loſs, if he ſhould ever find me out, and take to the *Red Lyon* over the way.

Merit. If I miſtake not, you were ſaying that you overheard ſome of the diſcourſe.— I think, Mr. *Spigot*, you have never a handſome ſilver tankard in the houſe.

Spigot. I make it my requeſt that it may have your honour's arms upon it, to put me in mind of drinking your health: But, alackaday, I had almoſt forgot it, we muſt drink the Lady's. Here, Drawer, a bottle of wine. Sit you down, Sir,— I can't help ſaying that your honour hath made a very handſome choice, and ſhe will be a rare fortune. Set down the bottle and glaſſes, and about your buſineſs, Sirrah.

Merit. She does not then ſhew the leaſt ſymptoms of compliance.

Spigot. A rare obſtinate girl, ifaith! If ſhe prove always in the right, ſhe will make a moſt excellent wife. But, a plague on it, my wife is always obſtinate, and always in the wrong, and that you will ſay is a little provoking: But we muſt all take our chance. Yonder comes *Griſt*, you can never be known, and from him we may learn more of the matter.

Merit. I never ſaw him,— by all means pray him to ſit down.

Spigot. The young fellow, your rival, is with him. [*To* Merit *apart*]. Maſter *Griſt*, if you and your friend have no particular affairs, this honeſt gentleman and I ſhall be oblig'd to you for your company.

SCENE VI.

Spigot, Merit, Griſt, Doggrell.

Doggrell. I Marry that old put's daughter, Maſter *Griſt!* I know my duty to my family better. Beſides, I am actually in love too with a woman of condition. Tho' he hath my fortune in his hands, neither that, nor my perſon are at his diſpoſal.

Griſt. Mr. *Plowdon* is my very good friend; and as my mill hath his conſtant cuſtom, I may in a manner ſay that I owe my bread to him; ſo that I ought to be ſo neighbourly to him as to wiſh him a good harveſt, or ſo; but further than that, d'ye ſee, I have nothing to ſay to him nor his daughter neither.

Spigot. If you are not upon private affairs, Gentlemen, we beg you to join converſation. You ſee, Sir, I make uſe of a landlord's privilege. 'Tis the whole amuſement of my life to divide my ſelf among my gueſts, for I love to entertain them all as well as I can. Now this is the way I live every day of my life.

Griſt. The affair we were talking of is no ſecret. It hath ſet the whole Inn in an uproar. This is the young gentleman Mr. *Plowdon* intended for his daughter, but it ſeems the gentleman hath other intentions of his own.

Spigot. You are his neighbour and friend, Mr. *Griſt*; I left you juſt now together. You ſhould perſwade him to temper.

Griſt. Why, as a neighbour and friend, Mr. *Spigot*, he claims the privilege of being more unreaſonable with me than with any body elſe. His daughter, I muſt own, is a fine obſtinate girl, and ſeems reſolv'd never to repent of her over-haſty obedience. I miſtake her ſhrewdly or ſhe hath other griſt to grind; and if ſhe hath, Mr. *Doggrell*, idad, is even with her, for her mill he owns is not for his Turn.

Merit.

Merit. Does ſhe give him no anſwer at all?

Griſt. Not a word; ſhe is as ſtill and ſilent as a mill pool, and juſt like that, only becauſe ſhe cannot have her own way; but, in troth, ſhe will have it at laſt, or break bounds. So I told him, which put him in a plaguy paſſion. He then grew ſo obſtreperous, that (tho' I am a miller) he was too noiſy for me; and ſo I left him determin'd to lock up his daughter to night in the next room to his own.

Dogg. Let us have done with that old fool and his daughter. What think you, landlord, of the lady in the nun's habit? Is not ſhe a moſt delicious piece?

Spigot. Hah, Mr. *Doggrell*, are you thereabouts?

Dogg. Her manner, her behaviour, her converſation, beſpeak her a woman of condition. A fine gentleman would not be thrown away upon her. I hate any thing that is vulgar.

Merit. Then to reſcue a young Lady from being immur'd in a convent, is an amour of ſpirit. Hath ſhe beauty, Sir, equal to her birth?

Dogg. You muſt know, Sir, till I ſaw her, my muſe was my only miſtreſs; but ſhe hath given me an idea of beauty beyond all poetical deſcription. The ſun, moon and ſtars, and thoſe kind of things, are not ſublime enough for her. I feel ſhe hath inſpir'd me; my imagination is on wing; 'tis impoſſible not to write. And I know by her eye ſhe hath a ſoul ſuſceptible of verſe.

Merit. 'Tis the reſolution, Sir, of a man of ſenſe. Would you allow another to chooſe you a companion or a friend? Without doubt, no. Much leſs ſure would I allow another to chooſe me a wife. 'Tis an impoſition for life; and a man of ſpirit hates all impoſition.

Griſt. Now to my thinking there is very little choice in the matter, for women are no ſooner made wives but they become all alike. Why there's Mr. *Spigot*'s wife now hath my wife's ways to a hair. Their clacks are eternally a going. They will too take a world of care off our hands, and you may hear them governing the family all the houſe over, and all the day long.

Merit. Love-verſes, Sir, are very inſinuating, and thoſe, with perſeverance, muſt undermine the ſtrongeſt reſolution. You will excuſe me, Gentlemen, it grows late.—

This Fool's Converſation hath given me Hope.[*To* Spigot] Gentlemen, your Servant.

[*As the Company are breaking up, enter* Aliſon.

SCENE VII.

Spigot, Griſt, Doggrell, Aliſon.

Aliſ. BY my fay, Lads, I ſhall not part with you yet. This going to bed every night, unleſs upon a good occaſion, is the bane of all good ſociety. I ever thought ſleep ſo much time loſt; but I never could perſwade any one of my five husbands to be of this opinion. Come ſit you down, Maſter *Griſt*. For ſhame, Younker! going to bed! If woman is in the caſe, you have indeed the only gentleman-like excuſe for leaving your bottle. Fill about, Landlord, 'tis your intereſt to encourage mirth. In troth, Mr. *Doggrell*, I have many precepts, and much matter of advice to give you, but if company ſtays for you, and you have any thing to do beſides ſleep, get you to bed, and leave us to our wine; for I would upon no account be any gentlewoman's hindrance. Come, Boy on t'other hand of me then. Here's to your inclinations. Poh! fill a bumper, Goodman *Griſt*, and then you drink your own inclinations too. You ſee my bonny hoſt there ſets you a good example. By my troth, a handſome young fellow! And I am far enough advanc'd in years to have a taſte for theſe ſort of ſtriplings.

Dogg. *Myrtilla*, divine *Myrtilla!* [*Drinking.*

Aliſ. And why not *Florinda*? Ever lay hold of the woman you can come at. Now to my thinking, *Plowdon's* daughter is a good ſightly wench. Were I a young fellow, in troth I could not baulk her.

Griſt. Nor I neither.

Dogg. Were I a miller, I ſhould ſay ſo too. Why thou can'ſt not look upon a woman with the eye of a gentleman.

Griſt. But I can look upon a woman with the eye of a man; that is to ſay, conſider a woman as a woman. Now I'll be judg'd by my Dame here, if that is not looking upon a woman as ſhe would be look'd upon.

Aliſ. Theſe nice diſtinctions, my Boy, are not becoming your youth. But pray, Younker, let me know in what light a gentleman conſiders a woman?

Dogg.

Dogg. As a woman fit for a gentleman. There's a taſte in the choice of a woman.

Griſt. Miſs *Florinda*, for ought I know, may not be for your tooth: She will not break her heart, that I can tell you; the young woman is as unwilling as your ſelf, and in refuſing her, you only diſappoint her of the pleaſure of diſobedience. Yet for all that, Maſter *Plowdon* ſwears he will bring matters about at laſt: For why, quoth he, ſhould I be more ſcrupulous than other parents? and indeed what is it to him whether, forſooth, you love one another or no?

Dogg. How, love works in the imagination! *Myrtilla!* divine *Myrtilla!*

Aliſ. Why divine *Myrtilla*? what ſignifies thinking of a woman as an angel? You would have a much better Chance by conſidering her, and talking to her as a woman.

Dogg. Had I ſuch an advocate as you, Madam.—

Aliſ. You would do juſt as you do now, ſit ſtill and think of her, and ſo diſcredit my recommendation. Believe me, Lad, a woman is often won by ſpeaking without thinking, but never by thinking without ſpeaking.

Dogg. Could I be ſo happy as to have you, Dame, for my introducer!

Aliſ. But why will you have any introducer at all? Love is always the better heard, when he is his own advocate, and without witneſſes. And ſo, Stripling, you look upon me of an age fit only to ſet young folks together, and think of times paſt.

Dogg. I beg your pardon, Madam. Could I have ſeen *Myrtilla*'s maid, I ſhould not have preſum'd to have talk'd to you upon this ſubject.

Aliſ. Upon what ſubject? You may ſpeak freely, younker.

Spigot. The gentleman, perhaps, may be upon the reſerve before company.

Griſt. And ſo may my good dame too.

Dogg. For that matter, Sir, I am not aſham'd of ſhewing my verſes, I own I have writ upon her. All I ask, Madam, is, that you would do me the office of a *Zephyr*, and bear my ſighs to the lady. [*Takes a paper out of his pocket.*

Aliſ. We have no private affairs at preſent. We'll all break up together.— You ſhall ſhew the verſes by and by in my own room; and there we'll conſider how I may be of uſe to you.

Dogg. Upon my word, I have no ſcruples, nor ever had, of communicating my poetry,— Nay, pray, Gentlemen, I ſhould be glad of your opinion. (*Ex.* Spigot *and* Griſt. Doggrell *walking, and reading to himſelf.*

Aliſ. Let us into my room then, Stripling; there we can talk eaſier and freer. I hate to be over-heard by tapſters and ſervant-maids. Put up your verſes, Sir: *Spigot* and *Griſt* are gone, and I am ſure you have read them before. He is conceited; he is a fool; but he is young and handſome, and an opportunity at my time of life is not to be loſt. My mind gives me that I ſhall make ſomething of this young fellow. Thoſe conceited coxcombs who impoſe upon themſelves, tempt their honeſt neighbours to impoſe upon them too. Now, becauſe he hath had one woman offer'd him, his vanity thinks no woman can deny him.

In love, he's like the dog, (that fooliſh glutton)
Who for a ſhadow loſt ſubſtantial mutton.

End of the Second ACT.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

Myrtilla's *Apartment*.

Aliſon, Buſy.

Buſy. 'TIS late, Dame, and my Lady requires my attendance; ſo I muſt beg to be excus'd 'till to-morrow.

Aliſ. Nay, Mrs. *Buſy*, I will not be deny'd. I muſt, and will ſpeak with you. Your Lady, I know, hath a kindneſs for Miſs *Plowdon*; beſides, by what you have ſaid of her, I am ſure you too wiſh her well; and I muſt acquaint you, your love can never be more ſeaſonably ſhewn than juſt now; for the girl is in imminent danger of marriage.

Buſy. To-morrow, my good Dame: Let us talk over this affair to-morrow. But what, after all, in the name of love, would you have my Lady do?

Aliſ. Have her do? Have her take the natural diverſion of woman, and play the coquet. Mr. *Doggrell*, you know, is ſmitten with her; and the leaſt encouragement from her, would take him quite off from *Florinda*. By flattering and deceiving him, I would have her divert herſelf, and ſave her friend.

Buſy. To be ſure, Dame, I muſt know her way of thinking; and I know ſhe hates herſelf for ſo far meddling in the affair already. She loves *Florinda*, I grant you, and would do much for her: But to expoſe her character again, as ſhe calls it, pſhaw! pſhaw! I know ſhe never will conſent to it.

Aliſ. I would not have you be too poſitive, girl. A lady may be cool and phlegmatic enough to refuſe a man; but to deny herſelf the ſatisfaction of deceiving a Man! I muſt beg your pardon for that—— I know ſomewhat of women too, Mrs. *Buſy*, and I will not be-

lieve any thing ſo very improbable. —For my part, I don't know whether that is not the greater pleaſure of the two.

Buſy. To convince you, Dame, that I myſelf would do any thing, in my power, to ſerve Miſs *Plowdon*— But after all, what can I do? for I know my Lady will upon no account conſent to ſee the young fellow again.

Aliſ. But you may flatter him with the hopes of it.

Buſy. Upon my word, Dame, at this time 'tis impoſſible. My Lady wants me this moment. —If you could contrive to play off the young fellow, you may ſay for me what you pleaſe.

Aliſ. But methinks, if poſſible, I would fain have your Lady ſee him—yet hold. —If you could procure me *Myrtilla*'s dreſs and veil—I would undertake it myſelf.

Buſy. We' have ſettled it then—ſo, now leave me; as ſoon as I have put my Lady to bed you ſhall have it. I'll vouch for any thing you ſay or do, and you ſhall impoſe upon him in your own way. But, hark! who's at the door?

Aliſ. 'Tis Mr. *Doggrell.* May he come in?

Buſy. By no means. I can't, Sir, talk to you now. My Dame here, will inform you of my readineſs to do you good offices. Let him know, Madam, that I cannot be ſeen to night. —In about an hour I ſhall have the dreſs ready for you. Go to him then, Dame, and fix your aſſignation. Away, I beg you, for I hear my Lady coming. [*Exit* Aliſon.] How can any mortal refuſe to aſſiſt a fellow-creature in ſuch a dreadful circumſtance! There is no barbarity like a forc'd marriage. Such a wife is a perfect galley-ſlave; always in diſagreeable, ſhocking company, and chain'd for life, to row one way and look another.

SCENE II.

Myrtilla, Buſy.

Myrt. TO what purpoſe have I given myſelf all this trouble? I am convinc'd I ſhall ſee nothing but my winding-ſheet; and that muſt be a moſt horrid, ſhocking ſight! Hark. Is not that a death-watch?

Buſy.

Buſy. 'Tis only the watch your Ladyſhip lent me to put you in mind of the hour.

Myrt. I vow, *Buſy*, the hour is ſo near, I tremble every joint of me. Well, what o'clock is it?

Buſy. It wants two or three minutes of twelve.

Myrt. The Cake here is ready, prepar'd too by the infallible receipt. Every thing upon this table I hope remains untouch'd, and in the very place I left it. Take off the Cover. So. Now every thing is in order.

Buſy. The Ceremony is ſo near at hand, that it is now high time for me to leave you.

Myrt. Hold. Stay. I ſhall die if I am left alone. You ſhall not ſtir. I cannot ſupport it. — Place yourſelf in the corner of the room. In that chair, yonder.

Buſy. But if, after the clock ſtrikes twelve, one word ſhould eſcape us, the whole charm is broke; and when we have any body to ſpeak to, you know, Madam, words often ſlip from us without thinking. I'll be within call, Madam.

Myrt. I will have you ſtay. Sit you down in the place I bid you. Whatever you ſee or hear, ſay nothing.

Buſy. I know my duty, Madam. For to be ſure, that woman does not deſerve to ſerve a Lady, who cannot be deaf, dumb, and blind whenever it is convenient. Now I will ſay that for myſelf— [*The clock ſtrikes twelve.*

[*As the clock is ſtriking,* Myrtilla *by ſigns ſtops the diſcourſe. She retires ſtep by ſtep, and ſeats herſelf at the table in a melancholy poſture.* Buſy, *in like manner, takes her poſt.* *Sir* Harry Gauntlet *enters, places himſelf in the chair over againſt* Myrtilla; *eats, and drinks; he then addreſſes her in dumb-ſhow; ſhe continues in the ſame poſture; he now riſes, approaches, and kneels.*]

SCENE III.

Myrtilla, Buſy, Sir *Harry Gauntlet.*

Sir *Harry.* IN ſhort, Madam, you ſee deſtiny will have it ſo. Love pleads for me, and the aſpect of the planets favour me. What muſt be, muſt be. If the Incantation reſtrain your tongue, conſent with your eyes; I don't inſiſt upon a verbal declaration. What, both

both your tongue and eyes under command! Are you a woman? This is ſupernatural! Is this delicate hand real? [*He offers to take her hand, ſhe ſhrieks, and runs out of the room.*

SCENE IV.

Sir *Harry Gauntlet*, *Buſy*.

Buſy. GO, you unthinking creature; you have ſpoil'd all. You had forgot you were a ſpirit.

Sir *Harry*. I'll follow her.

Buſy. You will but make the matter worſe. You will ruin the whole affair. What buſineſs had you to be talking?

Sir *Harry*. Why had you not told me ſo? One can never expect to gain upon a woman by ſilence, unleſs 'tis to let her talk without interruption; for women love to have talk always a going; when they are tir'd of talking themſelves, they like to be talk'd to.

Buſy. Hark! what noiſe was that? As I live, the whole houſe is in an uproar. You will loſe your miſtreſs, your miſtreſs her reputation, and I the reward you promis'd me. What ſhall we do?

Sir *Harry*. A good ſteady aſſurance may ſtill impoſe upon her credulity. We may have another opportunity. Affirm; perſiſt, that you neither ſaw or heard any thing. Superſtition is inclin'd to believe what is improbable. In the mean time, I'll play the apparition and vaniſh.

Buſy. Away, for company are coming in upon us.

SCENE V.

Myrtilla, *Aliſon*.

Myrt. HOW happy was it that you fell in my way! I was frighted to that degree——

Aliſ. Gracious, Madam, and what was the matter? Hath love committed burglary, and broke into your Bed-chamber? Sleeping or waking, to my thinking, a man is a good, convenient companion; believe me, precious, a husband will ſave you from all theſe frights.

Myrt. Bleſs me! hold — ah — there he is again.

Aliſ.

Aliſ. What? Where? Where is he? Gracious, Madam, you made me ſtart.

Myrt. My dear Dame, I beg your pardon. It made ſo deep an impreſſion upon me, that fancy recalls my fears.

Aliſ. Do you ſee now, my dear Lady? Theſe are ſome of the ſcare-crows that attend virginity. Whims, viſions and vapours; juſt my caſe when I was a maid, as I hope for a help-mate!

Myrt. Buſy. Where is the wench gone? *Buſy, Buſy,* where are you?

SCENE VI.

Myrtilla, Aliſon, Buſy.

Buſy. MADAM.

Myrt. Where do you run? Why do you leave me? There is more vexation with theſe creatures! I vow 'tis intolerable.

Buſy. By your Ladyſhip's looks, I thought you juſt falling into a fit, ſo I ran out to fetch cold water, ſtrong-water, your ſmelling-bottle, or any thing.

Myrt. You ſaw him, I ſuppoſe, *Buſy*?

Buſy. What, Madam?

Myrt. The apparition.

Buſy. The apparition! Dear Madam, it muſt be all fancy, for I neither ſaw or heard any thing.

Myrt. 'Tis wonderful! 'Tis prodigious ſtrange!

Aliſ. Bleſs us all, an apparition, ſaid you?

Buſy. I did indeed obſerve the candle of a blueiſh colour; and the room ſtill ſmells a little of brimſtone.

Aliſ. For certain, there is a kind of a ſulphurous ſmell. Strong, very ſtrong! gracious! don't you ſmell it, Madam?

Myrt. You ſeem frighten'd, Dame.

Aliſ. To be ſure, Madam, I never ſaw any thing worſe than myſelf in all my life. Frighten'd, ſaid you? Alack-a-day, all my skittiſh days are over. When I was young, indeed, like other young girls, I thought fear very becoming; and I had then, Madam, tho' I ſay it, a very genteel ſcream.

Myrt.

Myrt. But, dear Dame, how can you talk ſo? Only think of an apparition, Madam: A manifeſt, plain apparition!

Aliſ. All this, believe me, comes with lying alone; and to be ſure, 'tis a moſt fearful thing to lie alone! If you can get over the dread of marriage, take my word, the beſt cure for fear, is a husband. What have we here! A cake, a bottle of wine, and St. *Agnes* night too! Are theſe your pranks, Madam? 'Twas a ghoſt, my dear girl, I perceive of your own raiſing.

Myrt. Your contradicting my former fortune, Dame, drew me in to make this experiment.

Aliſ. And how do you like him? By your ſcream, one would have thought it had not been only the ſhadow of a man. Come, honey, here's to his health. Nay, girl, you may very decently pledge me, for by your own rule it muſt be a match.

Myrt. I tell you, I hate the fellow mortally.

Aliſ. So much the better for him, ſay I. He had better have your hate before marriage, than after; for the man, ſome time or other, muſt know a woman in all her humours.

Myrt. I had got the better of every paſſion but curioſity. Why did I revive this abominable creature in my imagination? There is a ring too in yonder ſnuff of the candle! How ſhall I get off from this affair?

Aliſ. A wedding one, by my troth! By that light, child, you muſt wear it.

Myrt. Do you believe then, Dame, that I muſt inevitably ſubmit to this fortune?

Myrt. Never take an averſion to the man before you are married to him. There is a time, Madam, for all things.

Myrt. But, perhaps, this may be all deluſion, and my fancy may have impos'd upon me.

Aliſ. By every thing you ſay or do, I ſee plainly you have man at heart; ſhew yourſelf a woman then, and follow your inclinations. But if you are ſtill undetermin'd, here is now in the Inn one of the moſt cunning men that ever drew circle; hear what he ſays. To be ſure, Madam, he foretold me two or three of my huſbands, and deſcrib'd 'em to me to a hair. Look ye,

bird,

bird, if you find him of a contrary opinion, you muſt do what none of us care to do, give up your own, and be married as ſoon as you can. Sure, Madam, you muſt have heard of Doctor *Aſtrolabe*!

Myrt. Many of my acquaintance have told me the ſtrangeſt things of him! I own it would ſtagger me prodigiouſly, if his predictions to-morrow morning ſhould tally with what I ſaw to night. I really then don't know what I ſhould do. Are all my things in order for going to bed? You will follow me, *Buſy*. Good night to you, Dame.

Aliſ. Sweet dreams, lucky omens, and happy predictions attend you girl. [*Ex.* Myrtilla.

Buſy. As ſoon as I have put my Lady to bed, and can get away from her, under covert of her dreſs, you ſhall anſwer for her; and ſo, Dame, I put Miſs *Flowdon*'s affair entirely under your own management.

SCENE VII.

Aliſon, Doggrell.

Aliſ. LET me die if I don't like this young fool; and ten to one, in this adventure, I ſhall gain a double end, ſave *Florinda*, and ſerve myſelf.

Dogg. You muſt pardon my impatience, Madam; for I cannot go to bed 'till I know the ſucceſs of my poetry. Have you given her the verſes?

Aliſ. She's won, ſhe's charm'd, ſhe's thy own, my lad. As I hope for indulgence, ſhe read 'em like a lover. She languiſh'd; ſhe ſigh'd; ſhe prais'd 'em; ſhe repeated 'em; and ſhe felt 'em to that degree, that if I had not known they had been yours, I ſhould have thought ſhe had writ them herſelf.

Dogg. So then I may preſume upon hope.

Aliſ. Upon certainty, my boy, if you purſue her in the way you ought. Poetical feet alone will never do. Why *Apollo* himſelf was forc'd to run Miſs *Daphne* out of breath, or he had never had her. All women love a chaſe, and will twiſt and turn like a hare, though they reſolve to be caught at laſt. By thoſe little freaks and gambols they try whether their lovers be ſtaunch, or no.

Dogg.

Dogg. Every little circumſtance touches the heart of a lover. Was ſhe very inquiſitive? Was you very particular and partial in your anſwers? I long to know the whole converſation.

Aliſ. She ask'd at leaſt above a hundred queſtions about you, before ſhe had patience to ſtay for an anſwer; and I told her — ah, *benedicite!* what did I not tell her! gracious, ſure *Mr. Dogrell*, I was almoſt in love with my own deſcription. Now, as to men, you muſt know, there is no woman that knows me, but will take my recommendation. But, heark ye, young man, let me know how you intend to anſwer your character? I have promiſed much for you, and if you do as you ſhould, I know your youth with my experience muſt carry her. Tell me now how you mean to attack her?

Dogg. In form, Madam. All great Ladies, I know, love form.

Aliſ. In publick, I grant you, you can never treat her with too much of it; but in private, they will take it mortally ill of you, if you forget they are women. *A tête à tête* puts us all upon the level, and love then is the only civility.

Dogg. I doubt myſelf; for as yet I am but a novice in courtſhip.

Aliſ. Now, to my thinking, you ſeem ſo juſtly ſenſible of your own merits, that you can hardly want aſſurance.

Dogg. But aſſurance may be interpreted as folly and inſolence, and treated accordingly.

Aliſ. Never, ſtripling, when apply'd in proper ſeaſon. With a competent ſtock of that, you can never be at a loſs. Why, you would not, ſure, put the woman to difficulties, and require it of her! Unleſs one of the parties have it, I pray you, which way can love go on?

Dogg. May I hope then, Madam, for an interview?

Aliſ. Think of what ſhe hopes from it.

Dogg. But I fear my natural baſhfulneſs.

Aliſ. Why then will you ſee her at all, and diſcredit yourſelf, and my recommendation? Raiſe your courage with a glaſs of wine, my lad, and don't be awkward. Go, do as I bid you; for I would fain have you make ſomething of this affair. Does not aſſignation at this ſecret hour of the night, give you a hint not to be too much

much upon the reſerve? This at once puts you upon an eaſy foot; if you diſtruſt your own behaviour, drink yourſelf up to preſence of mind, and I'll anſwer for it you win her.

SCENE VIII.

Doggrell, Aliſon, Buſy.

Buſy. MY lady hath a word or two to ſay to me in private, before ſhe admits you, Sir— So that I hope, Dame, you too will excuſe me. You'll find every thing ready for you in the next room.

[*Aſide to* Aliſon.

Aliſ. I cannot leave Mr. *Doggrell* in better hands; remember my advice, and don't be baſhful. So, now I have deliver'd him over to your friendſhip, and good offices, I have, a-lack-a-day, nothing more to do but to go to bed and ſleep. [*Exit* Aliſon.

Buſy. As ſoon as my lady is ready to receive you, I'll bring you word, Sir, and have the honour of introducing you.

Dogg. Your civilities, Madam, are beyond recompence. I ſhall impatiently, Madam, attend your ſummons. In the mean time a bumper or two ſhall raiſe my courage, and inſpirit my converſation. [*Aſide.*

SCENE IX.

Buſy, Aliſon.

Aliſ. HAVE you ſecur'd the door? I long to play off this fool, and ſave Miſs *Plowdon.*

Buſy. I always lov'd the girl, that's certain; but 'tis as much as my place is worth if my lady ſhould come to know of this frolick; ſo, my dear Dame, if ever any thing comes to light, you muſt take care to keep me out of the ſcrape.

Aliſ. Never doubt my diſcretion, Mrs. *Buſy.*

Buſy. So then now, Dame, I'll prepare you for the part. Let me die, if I ſhould care to put on the dreſs; I ſhould be afraid it might prove ominous.

[*Dreſſes* Aliſon *in the veil.*

Aliſ.

Aliſ. There is nothing in outward appearance, Girl. A cloak and band do not make a man religious; nor a prudiſh look, nor a nun's habit, make a woman chaſte. Till now I was ever a plain-dealer. Every woman hath her frailties, and the ſin of hypocriſy was very ſeldom mine; but a diligent woman, and a good houſe-wife, muſt turn her hand to every thing.

Buſy. You will be ſure to bring me the dreſs to-morrow before my lady riſes.

Aliſ. Depend upon it Mrs. *Buſy*, I ſhall be punctual in every thing.

Buſy. Now then, Dame, if you are ready, I'll go and introduce your lover, and then to bed. I ſhall be impatient to laugh over this adventure with you to-morrow. [*Exit* Buſy.

Aliſ. Thoſe have a rare, eaſy, indolent time of it, to be ſure, whoſe Inclinations grow old with their conſtitutions; but that is not my caſe. I ſhould have a fine time of it, ifackins, to let cuſtom and the world be judge of my conſtitution, which, in troth, hath worn out two brace and a half of brave jolly husbands already, and yet never the worſe for it. A-lack and well-aday, that ever love was ſin, ſay I! But hold; I muſt now ſuit my talk to the formality of my habit.

SCENE X.

Aliſon, Buſy, Doggrell.

Buſy. YOU were in the right indeed, Sir, to finiſh your bottle. That laſt bumper will help to keep up the diſcourſe, and give a ſpur to your gallantry. Mr. *Doggrell*, Madam.

Aliſ. Don't leave the candles flaring in my eyes— Set 'em upon yonder table.— When I want you, *Buſy*, I ſhall call. But now I think on't you may go to bed. I ſhall want you no more to Night. [*Exit* Buſy. Mr. *Doggrell*, your ſervant.

Dogg. The joy, the tranſport, the hurry of ſpirits, the wiſhes, the fears, that perplex a paſſionate lover, have quite deconcerted me. What ſhall I ſay? How ſhall I addreſs you? Madam—Madam. I hope you will pardon my confuſion, and—and—

Aliſ.

Alif. I am ſure I can hardly pardon myſelf. Don't you think me very odd, Mr. *D'Ogrelle* in truſting myſelf and you with ſuch an uncommon viſit? But I beg you, Sir, don't talk to me of wiſhes, fears, and hurry of ſpirits. Now you may think it all affectation; but I really can't abide all thoſe ſort of immodeſt expreſſions. I vow, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, I think your verſes charming; I wiſh you had choſe a more agreeable ſubject.

Dogg. The verſes, Madam, were none of mine. Love dictated 'em, I only tranſcrib'd 'em: In the attempt I may be cenſur'd as a poet, but ought to be excus'd as a lover.

Alif. But, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, how ſhall I excuſe myſelf for this indiſcretion? All you fine men are apt to put ſtrange interpretations upon the little innocent liberties of women. I mortally hate myſelf now for what I have done. I know you muſt think me moſt monſtrouſly ridiculous. But if you give it the moſt malicious turn, (as a woman would give it,) I bluſh to gueſs what you muſt think of me.

Dogg. I'll tell you, Madam, ſincerely what I do think of you. I ſee you as a lover, I think of you as a lover.

Alif. Oh! dear Sir, don't think of me that way, I beg it of you: And now we are alone, to talk to me of love too! I knew you were thinking of what you ſhould not think.

Dogg. Since then you know my thoughts —

Alif. Why, ſure you won't have the aſſurance to confeſs 'em! By your thinking this way of me, I know you muſt have a prodigious ſtock of vanity; for thoſe men that have too good an opinion of themſelves, have always too bad a one of women.

Dogg. Nay, Madam; now you oblige me to explain myſelf. — If honourable love —

Alif. But, dear Sir, — conſider we are alone. Conſider too, that it is not proper and decent for a woman of my cloth to hear every thing. But when one hath done an indiſcreet thing, one never knows where it will end. I vow, I wiſh I had never ſeen you.

Dogg. What are you afraid of, dear Madam? What have you done?

Alif. Nay, I tremble only to think what you may do.

Dogg. But ſure, Madam, there are ſome little innocent liberties that are allow'd in the moſt diſcreet addreſs. For example, Madam, the liberty of glances was never denied a lover. Let this malicious cloud then no longer eclipſe the ſun-ſhine of your beauty.

Alif. Deſiſt, I beg you. Theſe liberties do not become you, Sir.

Dogg. Why not become me, Madam? I ſhall behave myſelf like a gentleman.

Alif. To tell one ſo too is very impudent. You know, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, that is a very impudent expreſſion. I might, indeed, have expected all this.— But it is too late now.

Dogg. My addreſſes, Madam, are honourable. My family, my eſtate, are by no means contemptible. I propoſe myſelf as a husband.

Alif. As a husband! That, indeed, is a very different behaviour. I vow I was horridly frighted when you talk'd of behaving yourſelf like a gentleman.

Dogg. Conſider the propoſal, Madam. I hope, Madam, you are convinc'd that I love you.

Alif. Convinc'd! I don't know what you mean. Convinc'd! I am, ſure Sir, I have allow'd you no liberties.

Dogg. By this hand, I ſwear I love you. [*Kiſſes it.*]

Alif. Really, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, you are monſtrous rude. Let my hand go; do, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, now do.— I dare not make a noiſe at this time of night, and that to be ſure you know by your behaviour.

Dogg. You miſtake me, Madam; my addreſs is honourable.

Alif. You may be ſure, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, whatever I think, I never ſhall tell you that I like you, therefore, pray, ask no more queſtions. Though, indeed, if I were inclin'd to marriage — But have done, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*; for I will not be ask'd any more queſtions about any ſuch kind of thing.

Dogg.

Dogg. In this room, Madam, our converſation may, perhaps, be overheard.

Aliſ. By no means, Sir — I vow I won't truſt you in my bed-chamber. Yet after all, 'tis diſagreeable too to have all the world overhear our diſcourſe. I take it for granted, Sir, you won't be rude. — But from a nunnery to a husband, methinks, is too deſperate a tranſition. If it was not ſo late — To morrow — Well then — to morrow I will allow you to talk to me — and ſo, Sir, good night to you. — What do you mean? I beg you, Sir, don't be impertinent. — I hate myſelf now for having ſo much curioſity — For once then I will truſt myſelf to your civility; — for I muſt hear what you can ſay for yourſelf. Yet, I own, 'tis not very diſcreet of me.

There's double danger in an aſſignation;
Though we reſiſt the man's ſolicitation,
We're often loſt by woman's inclination.

ACT. IV.

SCENE I.

Sir Harry Gauntlet. Buſy

Buſy. DOCTOR *Aſtrolabe* will be here this minute; for my lady appointed him in this room at this hour. I'll keep her from breaking in upon you, till you have brib'd him to your intereſt. If this affair be rightly carried on (tho' ſhe hath refus'd you ſo often) you have her; I know ſhe will conſent the firſt time you ſee her. I have expected you here with the utmoſt impatience. Your ſtay might have ſpoil'd our whole ſcheme.

Sir Harry. I have been unluckily faſten'd upon by an impertinent univerſity acquaintance, and 'twas with the utmoſt difficulty (he was ſo full of his amours and his poetry) that I got rid of him. And, at laſt, I was oblig'd to promiſe him a hearing, or he would have follow'd me.

Buſy. D'Ogrelle. Is not that his name?

Sir Harry. Ay, *Doggrell.*

Buſy. A moſt ridiculous conceited creature! I have not time now to tell you his ſtory, for Doctor *Aſtrolabe* I ſee is coming. I'll keep my lady off, to give you what time I can to prepare the ſcheme. Succeſs attend you.

SCENE II.

Sir Harry Gauntlet. Aſtrolabe.

Aſtro. I Profeſs, I expected to have found a lady. In order to wait upon you, Sir, I was forc'd to interrupt my ſtudies. I do, indeed, ſometimes wait upon ladies in their own apartments; but the gentlemen always come to mine. You took me off from calculating a great lady's nativity; and the life of moſt ladies is extreamly perplex'd and intricate. 'Tis a hard thing to trace 'em through all their unaccountable ways of life! And really, Sir, to tell what any woman will do, is a ſtudy exceeding difficult, becauſe even but an hour beforehand, 'tis what they themſelves cannot tell you. Indeed, Sir, I was very ſorry to be interrupted.

Sir Harry. But an interruption in a regular way, Doctor. Why the greateſt lawyers and phyſicians are always ready to excuſe theſe ſort of interruptions.

[*Fees him.*]

Aſtro. O dear Sir — This is what I never can take ill from any gentleman. I am willing to oblige as far as lies within the circumference of my art, and eſpecially a perſon who hath applied to me in ſo handſome a manner. Let me know how I can ſerve you. Propoſe your buſineſs.

Sir

Sir Harry. I know, Doctor, that you are provided with general anſwers for the common queſtions of your cuſtomers, and I grant you it ſhould be ſo; 'tis in the way of buſineſs. But that is not my affair; I want your aſſiſtance as a friend.

Aſtro. You have the appearance of ſo much honour, Sir, that you cannot mean to draw me in to expoſe and betray myſelf. If you have any commands, let me know in what manner I can be uſeful to you.

Sir Harry. I muſt acquaint you then, Doctor, that I am in love with a lady who is entirely govern'd by ſuperſtition. 'Twas ſhe that ſent for you, to conſult you about her marriage. What I want, Doctor, is to perſonate you, and to anſwer all her queſtions. I know the foretelling this match will make your fortune as well as mine, for you ſhall have all the credit of it

Aſtro. I truſt my ſelf and my profeſſion in your hands.

Sir Harry. As for the ſcience, Doctor, I ſhall not diſparage it. I have the twelve ſigns by heart, my memory is pretty well ſtock'd with the cant phraſes of Aſtrology, and I ſhall take care to be moſt learnedly unintelligible.

Aſtro. You know the ſcience ſo thoroughly, Sir, that one would think you had made it your profeſſion. This, Sir, in our way, I call my hieroglyphical Cap.

[*Puts it on* Sir Harry's *Head.*]

This, Sir, is the wand of incantation.

[*Gives him the Wand.*]

It gives a charming diabolical air to all the gibberiſh we utter; and when you have got on my gown, I have at once inveſted you with all my learning.

Sir Harry. But I ſhould have a face too proper to the habit. A beard and a pair of whiskers would give a magical turn to my countenance, and make my figure altogether more awful and ſolemn. Have you never a ſpare beard for a friend?

Aſtro. I have laid myſelf open to you, Sir, and ſhall confide in you in every thing. Rather than you ſhall be at a loſs for ſo neceſſary a dignity, I will diveſt my own

chin of its ſcience. You now ſee a man reduc'd by extravagance, and skulking from his creditors. Other people have liv'd upon my follies, and now I am living upon the follies of others. To your poſt, Sir; the ladies are coming. If I am ſeen in this condition, I may be diſcover'd; and in this buſineſs our reputation is as tender as a lady's; 'tis never to be regain'd, if ever we are found out.

SCENE III.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtilla, Buſy, Aliſon.

Aliſ. WHY how now, Doctor! don't you remember your old acquaintance? Good lack, good lack, you are moſt ſtrangely alter'd.

Sir Harry. Watching and reading the ſtars, Madam, is a ſtudy that wears a man's conſtitution moſt conſumingly. 'Tis not only women, you ſee, that are given to change, every thing is variable; kingdoms, friends, and faſhions; all change.

Myr. Is your Name *Aſtrolabe*, Sir?

Sir Harry. Yes, Madam, I am known and ſought after by the name of Doctor *Aſtrolabe*. *Germany* had the honour of my birth, and *Scorpio* was aſcendant at my nativity. I ſtudied the occult ſciences under an *Egyptian* necromancer. I was born an adept, and have done wonders from my cradle, for I am not only the ſeventh ſon, but the ſon of the ſeventh ſon. To give a ſketch of my proficiency, your ladyſhip muſt obſerve ——

Buſy. There was a ſtroke of art! your Ladyſhip! how could he know ſhe had a title? He muſt be a moſt prodigious great man to be ſure.

Myr. I won't have you talk, *Buſy*. Have done with your impertinent remarks, and be ſilent.

Sir Har. My head, Madam, is a perfect celeſtial microcoſm, like the concave and the convex of the heavens, lin'd with planets, and powder'd with conſtellations. Let your queſtion be within my cyclopede. But I love not

not to puzzle ladies with terms of art. Your buſineſs, Madam, is inſcrib'd in your forehead, and the fates decree you happineſs. Why will you oppoſe and ſtruggle againſt your ſtars? For do what you will you muſt be happy at laſt.

Myr. Since you pretend, Doctor, to be acquainted with my affairs, I ſuppoſe you are not a ſtranger to my name.

Sir Harry. Your ladyſhip's name (but queſtions of this kind are mere trifles;) let me ſee, it begins, ay, the firſt letter of it is an M. It will take up time; but if you will have me proceed, I could go through all the three ſyllables.

Myr. You need not. This is moſt prodigiouſly aſtoniſhing! But, Doctor, my buſineſs, I pray?

Sir Harry. Your buſineſs, Madam, is now upon the criſis. Every thing that was retrograde, now tends to a happy conjunction. Your buſineſs, let me ſee, lies in *Aries*, *Taurus*, and *Capricorn*, that is to ſay, the ſigns of marriage.

Myr. Then I am married, I preſume, Doctor?

Sir Harry. I preſume, Lady, you mean to miſlead me. The matrimonial hour is nearer than you imagine. You are juſt now entring the houſe of marriage. Don't be concern'd, Madam, there is nothing ſhocking in the appearance, for you are not married to him yet. The man, Madam, who ſeems the moſt unlikely perſon in the world at preſent, will have you. But moſt marriages, indeed, at firſt have that appearance.

Myr. Hath this unlikely Gentleman, I pray, Doctor, ever made his applications?

Sir Harry. Laſt night, Madam —— by the hour of his viſit, it might be a dream, (but of this I will not be poſitive;) yet laſt night, Madam, I affirm you ſaw him; and it will not be long; believe me, Madam, you will ſee him again ſooner than you imagine. Your houſe of marriage, indeed, is very uncommon, and almoſt incredible, for it begins in averſion, and ends in love. 'Tis to no purpoſe to hold out; for that very man muſt be your husband.

Myr. Muſt be! I hate that muſt be. Sure, Doctor, you muſt think me of an unaccountable complying temper, and a very particular ſort of woman, to do any thing, becauſe I muſt!

Sir Har. Believe me, Madam, ſo many hours as you defend yourſelf from marriage, ſo many happy ones you ſtrike out of the regiſter of your nativity. As I told you before, Madam, your love is very particular, for it will ſtrengthen by marriage.

Myrt. Why really, Doctor, as for the gentleman there are very few women but what would like him: But — nay — ſince you ſay I muſt — if ever he falls in my way — I ſhall not endeavour to ſet myſelf againſt him.

Sir Harry, Indeed, Madam, you had better be eaſy with the man you are to live with. I have perform'd my part. You know your fortune. So I ſay no more.

Myrt. If I muſt then give up all thoughts of a nunnery, 'tis a diſappointment; but I'll try to bear it, and reſign myſelf to matrimony. You muſt ſhew me to my company, Doctor; but, firſt, give me leave to return you thanks. [*Fees him.*]

[*Exit Myrtilla. Sir Harry returns.*]

Sir Harry, So: The ladies at laſt are all fairly diſmiſs'd. [*Enter Aſtrolabe.*]

Aſtro. You have play'd the part, Sir, with ſo much judgment, that it muſt turn out to my reputation; and I think it cannot fail of anſwering all your wiſhes.

Sir Har. For this fee, Sir, you are obliged to the lady. I hope my ſucceſs will ſoon lay an obligation upon me to reward you in a more particular manner.

Aſtro. We muſt remove from this room; you may more conveniently adjuſt yourſelf in mine. The landlord, I ſee, is coming this way, and company with him.

SCENE

SCENE V.

Spigot, Merit, Doggrell.

Spigot. HAVE but patience, dear Mr. *Merit*; the thing, I tell you, will do at laſt.

Merit. But which way, my good landlord, (granting ſhe had inclination,) can ſhe eſcape, or can I relieve her? *Plowdon* never leaves her alone a moment. [*Enter Doggrell.*

Dogg. Sir, I beg your pardon. I have a little buſineſs with my landlord; I ſhall not detain him. May one talk before him? You know one would not truſt every body. [*To Spigot.*]

Spig. You ſaw him with me laſt night. I'll be anſwerable for him. You are ſafe, Sir.

Dogg. Nay, for that matter, the affair cannot be long a Secret.

Merit. I hate to interrupt converſation.

Dogg. And ſo do I. I vow you ſhall not ſtir. Excuſe me, Sir; I have no ſcruple of ſpeaking before you.

Merit. Or before any body. [*Aſide.*]

Dogg. The Lady, Mr. *Spigot*, hath conſented.

Merit. Conſented! 'tis impoſſible. [*Aſide.*]

Spig. Conſented, ſay you?

Dogg. Fond of me to diſtraction, that's all!

Spig. But are you, Sir, as fond of her?

Dogg. This very morning you will have good reaſon to think ſo. You ſeem to wonder at her, landlord.

Spigot. No, Sir. I wonder at you.

Dogg. You thought then I would not have puſh'd the affair ſo far as marriage.

Spig. Wonder at you! Why, all the world, Sir, will wonder at you. What! give up ſuch an agreeable, ſuch an honourable purſuit for *Plowdon*'s daughter! Why, really, conſidering the fair way you were in laſt night, 'tis very aſtoniſhing.

Dogg. You are out, landlord. What do you mean? Give up the purſuit, man! Why, I have caught her.

Spig. Is *Myrtilla*, then the lady you have been talking of?

Dogg.

Dogg. The very ſame.

Merit. Sir, I wiſh you joy with all my heart.

Dogg. Old *Plowdon* is but juſt gone from me. I talked to him in my rattling way, of my being to be married. The put bit juſt like my landlord here, and is gone off very well ſatisfy'd it can be with no body but his daughter.

Spig. I ſhall have the honour, I hope, of providing your wedding dinner.

Dogg. To be ſure, my good landlord; and let it be a very handſome one. The old fellow's ſurpriſe and choler will be very entertaining, ſo that till then I beg you, gentlemen, to keep the ſecret. You will do me the honour I hope, Sir, to dine with me. [*To* Merit.] I have ſtill time enough upon my hands before the happy hour. Would *Sir Harry Gauntlet* were in the way! for I muſt ſee him. You ſaw me, landlord, with a gentleman juſt now, who was call'd away upon buſineſs. Can you tell me where I may find him?

Spig. I have not ſeen him ſince.

Dogg. I muſt ſeek him out. You'll excuſe me, Sir, that I leave you ſo abruptly. [*Exit* Doggrell.]

Spig. You are perfectly eaſy now upon his account; your rival, you ſee, is diſpos'd of. I'll make it my buſineſs from time to time to inform you how matters go, that the lady (when ſhe takes her flight) may find her mate. Yonder is Mr. *Doggrell's* lady walking this way in earneſt converſation with her maid; as he hath no buſineſs with your miſtreſs, I ſuppoſe you have none with his. Come with me, then, Sir; that you may be in the way, I'll ſhew you a convenient poſt, and then ſeek out for intelligence.

SCENE VI.

Myrtilla, Buſy.

Buſy. NAY, dear Madam, excuſe me, I perſuade you to nothing. A match-maker is a very unthankful office. Serve your friend that way, and you always loſe her; ſo I waſh my hands of the whole affair. But ſo much I will ſay, that to my thinking any husband

is

is better than a nunnery; for be it as it will, you will then have frequent opportunities of pleaſing yourſelf.

Myrt. As incredulous a thing as thou art, *Buſy*, I am poſitive the Doctor muſt have convinc'd thee; and were I to ſee him, really I don't know — Yes I do know what would become of me. The creature is grown intolerably agreeable to me. Since I muſt live in the world, what have I to do with this dreſs? I hate hypocriſy. Have I no other cloathes with me? Don't be ſo prodigiouſly ſurpriz'd, *Buſy*, for I own I have chang'd my reſolution.

Buſy. Where, dear Madam, can be the ſurprize? for I have long known that no woman is tied down to a reſolution. And, indeed, why ſhould ſhe? for as faſt as ſhe breaks one, ſhe hath the pleaſure of making another. Then there's a ſort of contradiction in it too, and ſelf-contradiction is amuſing enough when a woman can get no better.

Myrt. But you don't anſwer me, *Buſy*. Have I any thing with me beſides theſe hideous diſmal things to put on?

Buſy. Yes, Madam, your ladyſhip's laſt new gown and petticoat. But I thought you ſo near a nunnery, that I look'd upon them as my own. How uncertain are human expectations!

Myrt. I feel ſo forward and ſo impudent, that I vow I hate myſelf. Don't I bluſh, *Buſy*? The fellow runs in my head ſtrangely. I always thought that ſuit as becoming as any thing I have.

Buſy. Your ladyſhip knows I always thought ſo.

Myrt. Really, after all, a nunnery is ridiculous. I know you think ſo. A woman only expoſes herſelf by it; for 'tis telling the world her inclinations are ſo ſtrong that ſhe dares not truſt them. 'Tis to no purpoſe to ask me his name; for I never will own it till I ſee him again. But I think 'tis impoſſible the thing can happen.

Buſy. If 'tis the man you like beſt, I have a ſhrewd gueſs.

Myrt. Now without a joke, *Buſy*, the whole thing is moſt prodigiouſly ſurprizing. Doctor *Aſtrolabe* promis'd he would renew his addreſſes in perſon, and very ſuddenly too. Now if this circumſtance ſhould agree with laſt night's experiment, what can a woman do?

do? To be ſure I muſt have him, or do worſe. The firſt time he propoſes himſelf, I know I ſhall be horridly impudent, and conſent. Hah!

SCENE VII.

Myrtilla, Buſy, Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Buſy. TO be ſure, Madam, I never ſaw an apparition before in all my life! Don't think it fancy, for I vow I ſee him as plain as if he were really alive. Heaven, bleſs me, Madam, don't you ſee him? He's coming towards us. But now I ſee him nearer; don't be frighten'd, for 'tis only a man. 'Tis he himſelf.

Sir Harry. Do I dream ſtill? Or hath fortune guided me to my wiſhes? May I preſume, Madam, to give credit to my eyes, and call you *Myrtilla*?

Myrt. Who after this will ever call in queſtion the truth of art-magick? Never was any thing ſo ſurprizing. You are not miſtaken, *Sir Harry*; my name is *Myrtilla*.

Sir Harry. Every thing concurs; every thing is prodigious. In the habit of a Nun too! From this hour I ſhall look upon dreams as ſacred. Laſt night, Madam, after the fatigue of a ſtormy paſſage, I landed at *Dover*, and there in my ſleep I ſaw you, I made love to you, I offer'd to kiſs your hand; you ſnatch'd it from me, and flew out of the room; in ſtruggling, and not being able to ſtir to purſue you, I wak'd; but after that Madam, in my morning-dream, I ſaw you kind and conſenting; and your ladyſhip hath often told me, that morning-dreams were always true.

Myrt. I hope you have breakfaſted, *Sir Harry*; for I can't endure that any body ſhould tell their dreams when they are faſting. Conſidering what hath happen'd to me, you muſt allow, *Buſy*, this is wonderful. Deſtiny, indeed, ſeems to throw you in my way in ſpite of my reſolution. You know, *Sir Harry*, it will be to no purpoſe to perſiſt. As often as you have ask'd, you know you have had a refuſal.

Sir

Sir Harry. I know, Madam, 'tis what you have very often offer'd me; and though you offer it again, I find in my heart I ſhall never take it.

Myrt. How can you, *Sir Harry*, be ſo provoking? Suppoſe I was weak enough to liſten to you, could you be ſo barbarous as to hinder my vow? Would you ſeduce me from being a ſaint?

Sir Harry. Why in ſo much haſte, Madam? Be a woman firſt, and think of that afterwards.

Myrt. And have you really, *Sir Harry*, thought of me while you were abroad? Now that is what I can have no notion of. You muſt imagine me very credulous, indeed, if you think to perſuade me you have been conſtant in this long abſence. I believe, in dreams, in fairies, in viſions, in apparitions, and thoſe things; but I am not ſuch a fool to believe in man, who I know is deceiving.

Sir Harry. All women are certainly in the right to inſiſt upon conſtancy in a husband, for one of the two ought to have it; and why do we marry, but to ſupply each other's wants.

Myrt. You have ſurpriz'd me in a mighty odd humour, and I fear I ſhall be very indiſcreet. But I muſt and will tell it you. You muſt know then, the whim led me this morning to conſult a fortune-teller, who appear'd very zealous in your intereſt. He promis'd me happineſs, and a world of fine things.

Sir Harry. He promis'd then as if he had known my inclinations. You know, Madam, 'tis what I have promis'd you a thouſand times — Indeed, Madam, you'll find me reſponſible.

Myrt. Don't grow impertinent.

Sir Harry. How can you be ſo very cruel?

Myrt. Nay, dear *Sir Harry*, you ſee I am not ſo poſitive and ſo peremptory as I us'd to be; and is not that enough for you? But fortune will have it ſo, and it muſt come out at laſt; and ſo, *Sir Harry*,—you know what I mean.

Sir Harry. You will defer my happineſs no longer.

Myrt. I won't ſay ſo; but I won't contradict you. Now you know my mind. If I had not given my word ſo haſtily, to be ſure I ſhould never have done it. I hope, *Sir Harry*, I ſhall find you here. I cannot

not bear to be ſeen in this diſmal fuſty way. You muſt excuſe me for a minute or two; for I want to be dreſs'd again like a chriſtian. *Buſy*, follow me. You will be ſure, Sir *Harry*, to be conſtant till I come back.

SCENE VIII.

Sir *Harry Gauntlet*, *Doggrell*.

Buſy. THE Affair is done. You have her. Clinch it while you may. Never take a woman's word when you may take the woman. [*Exit* Buſy.]

Sir *Harry*. She will have at leaſt nine or ten minutes to change her mind, and that's a long while. I ſhall have good luck if ſhe hold out. If I depended upon her Temper alone, it would be impoſſible. All my hope and hold are in her ſuperſtition. Was ever any thing ſo unlucky? Here's that peſtering, teazing young fellow again. I ſhall be forc'd to affront him to get rid of him.

[*Enter* Doggrell.]

Dogg. Dear Sir *Harry*, your ſervant. I have been enquiring for you; I have been looking for you; and to find you quite diſengaged from all buſineſs, is juſt now very lucky; for I hate to interrupt any body. Sir *Harry*, I muſt beg a favour of you.

Sir *Harry*. Upon my word, Sir, I have buſineſs.

Dogg. But it is impoſſible it can be ſo preſſing as mine. I want a friend, Sir *Harry*; but how can I ſay I want a friend, when I have found you?

Sir *Harry*. Nay, prithee, *Doggrell* — It can never be ſo preſſing — but in the afternoon — in the evening it will be time enough.

Dogg. Do but hear me, Sir, and you will be convinc'd: Nay, you muſt hear me.

Sir *Harry*. Well, Sir — ſince I muſt.

Dogg. I know you are ſecret. I muſt acquaint you then, Sir, that laſt night I fell in love, I addreſs'd, and I vanquiſh'd.

Sir *Harry*. And what is all this to me, I pray you? So you are married, and I am to wiſh you joy. Is not that the thing?

Dogg.

Dogg. Promis'd, betroth'd, and all that; but I ſay no more. I am immediately going to give her perſonal ſecurity. The honour of having you, Sir *Harry*, a witneſs to the contract ——

Sir *Harry.* At any other time I ſhould not have refuſed you, but juſt now it is impoſſible; and you muſt excuſe me.

Dogg. That then I give up. But you muſt not deny me a minute or two while I read a couple of ſtanza's that I writ this morning. Metre ſubdu'd her, and metre ſhall maintain the conqueſt. Do, dear Sir *Harry*, comply with me; for I long to have your opinion before ſhe ſees them.

Sir *Harry.* At any other time you may command me.

Dogg. Now, Sir *Harry*; dear Sir *Harry* now. 'Tis impoſſible a minute or two can be of that conſequence. 'Tis a ſort of an ode of triumph: Your reading will do it juſtice. [*Gives a Paper.*]

Sir *Harry.* *Ye Gods! did* Jove *e'er taſte ſuch charms,*
When preſt in fair Alcmena's *arms?*
I'm ſure it could not be!
A triple night would not have done,
He would have blotted out the Sun
Had he been pleas'd like me.

Dogg. Not ſo faſt, I beſeech you, Sir *Harry.* Mark the harmony and the eaſy cadence that warbles through the whole ſtanza.—

Ye Gods! did Jove, *&c.* [*repeats affectedly, and follows Sir* Harry, *who appears very uneaſy.*]

Soft as the *Italian!* It ſtarts into the heavens. *Ye Gods!* perfectly *Pindaric! A triple night would not have done.* That *triple* is one of the moſt happy Epithets: 'tis worth a whole Poem of moſt of the modern Authors.

Sir *Harry.* You might ſpare your comment, Sir: for the beauties lie ſo ſuperficially apparent, that there is no room for criticiſm. So, now, Sir, I hope you have done with me.

Dogg. Nay, 'tis but one ſtanza more. I am amaz'd you can have ſo little curioſity,

Sir *Harry.* In my own defence then. [*Aſide.*]

Beneath

Beneath the ſable veil's diſguiſe,
Had you not hid your killing eyes,
It had been worſe for me.
My Nun *had then appear'd like* Jove,
I had been light'ning-ſtruck for love,
And dy'd like Semele.

A *Nun*, Sir?

Dogg. 'Tis always unſafe to truſt any body with half a ſecret; for they then generally tell more than the whole. I wonder how I could be ſo unguarded. Since we are to be married, you know 'tis expoſing no body more than myſelf. You muſt have heard of a lady whoſe name is *Myrtilla*. — But don't you think the laſt ſtanza very prettily turn'd?

Sir Harry: No wonder ſhe was in ſuch haſte to conſent. [*Aſide.*]

Dogg. Is not the alluſion to *Semele* elegant and genteel?

Sir Harry. After what hath paſt, ſhe is afraid the fool might fly off when he comes to the brink of marriage, and ſo the jilt would make ſure of me. [*Aſide.*]

Dogg. How good poetry can ſtrike a man of taſte! quite rapt and loſt in the ſublime!

Sir Harry. This coxcomb hath ſav'd me from having every coxcomb in town for my friend; for they all like to put themſelves upon an eaſy foot with the husband. [*Aſide.*]

Dogg. Nay, 'tis a pity to interrupt his admiration. Though I cannot have your company now, I hope, *Sir Harry*, you are not engag'd to day at dinner. You know 'tis upon a particular occaſion, and you muſt not deny me. I take it for granted you will come — pardon me, Sir, for this intruſion. Your Servant.

SCENE IX.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtilla, Buſy.

Myrt. THAT is a hideous conceited fellow; I wonder how you could be entertain'd with him. I was too well bred, you ſee, to break in upon the converſation.

Sir

Sir *Harry*. What an unaccountable myſterious creature is woman? [*aſide.*] Pray, Madam, how long hath your ladyſhip been acquainted with that gentleman?

Myrt. Laſt night was the firſt time I ever ſaw him.

Sir *Harry*. He told me indeed 'twas a very ſudden acquaintance.

Myrt. How can you, Sir *Harry*, be ſo ridiculous to talk grave about him? You know the fellow is a fool.

Sir *Harry*. You talk of fools and with fools every day, Madam, without this violent fluſter. What hath diſcompos'd you thus?

Myrt. You grow intolerable. I am glad you have ſhown me ſuch early proof of your temper and manners. What means the creature, *Buſy*? I am oblig'd to you, Sir *Harry*, for this ill-bred capricious behaviour; it hath ſav'd me from having any more of it for the future.

SCENE X.

Sir *Harry Gauntlet*, *Buſy*.

Buſy. I Nodded, I wink'd, I made ſigns; and all to no purpoſe. Seriouſly I believe you have ruin'd the whole affair. I never was more vex'd in all my life. What could you mean by that provoking behaviour?

Sir *Harry*. Such an uncommon unaccountable jilt! For ought I know, you too may be her accomplice. After what paſs'd laſt night, I would by no means prevent *Doggrell*'s taking upon him the title of husband.

Buſy. You may remember, Sir *Harry*, that I hinted to you that I had ſomething to tell you about that fool. All I have time to ſay now, is, that dame *Aliſon* laſt night borrow'd my Lady's habit of me out of a frolick, to impoſe upon him; and his folly and vanity hath now impos'd upon himſelf and you too. O' my conſcience ſhe was in ſuch a pettiſh way, that I fear ſhe won't eaſily be reconcil'd.

Sir *Harry*. Though the fellow is a fool, ſhe is a woman.——And how could I know? What we fear, we are very apt to believe.

Buſy. How jealouſy miſleads all you men! Beware of this ſame paſſion, I beg you, Sir, after matrimony. 'Tis a perfect ghoſt in a houſe that can never be laid.

Sir *Harry*. The thing will be made but worſe by endeavouring to explain it: So, dear Mrs. *Buſy*, you muſt help me out.

Buſy. Upon my word, Sir *Harry*, it was too much. If you had been her husband, and been us'd to her talk for twenty years together, you could not have ſeen and heard her with more indifference. But, be aſſur'd, Sir *Harry*, you ſhall always find a real friend in me.

Sir *Harry*. If a good convenient husband fell in your way, (I mean a rich one,) I think, my dear, you are not abſolutely determin'd againſt matrimony.

Buſy. Why ſhould I be more ſcrupulous than the reſt of my ſex? I have not vanity enough to riſque myſelf and my lovers like a coquette. Should I neglect a good offer, the fate of an old maid might too late convince me of my folly.

Sir *Harry*. Mr. *Doggrell*, girl, is a man of an eſtate. The nun he had an aſſignation with laſt night, he is to marry this morning.

Buſy. Is it ſo then, dame?——I was forc'd indeed to fetch the dreſs from her; and ſhe would not part with it till I promis'd to dreſs her out again to-day to carry on the joke. No wonder the old Lady was ſo zealous about it.

Sir *Harry*. Now if you will ſecure the habit, and give him a meeting, the habit will ſecure the man. I am ſure the ſcheme is practicable, and I really think you ſhould undertake it.

Buſy. And I really think ſo too. My good dame, I find, hath been a little too free in this affair; and for not truſting me, ſhe deſerves to be outwitted. While I have the habit in my poſſeſſion, ſhe cannot interfere with me. So I'll about it this moment. But here comes my Lady, and I dare not be ſeen with you. Curioſity will not let me go yet. I muſt liſten; for I long to hear how you will get over this affair.

SCENE XI.

Sir *Harry Gauntlet*, *Myrtilla*.

Myrt. IF I had thought you here ſtill, I aſſure you, Sir, I ſhould not have return'd this way ſo ſoon. Nay, never endeavour to excuſe yourſelf, 'twill be to no purpoſe.

Sir *Harry.* I am unhappy, Madam, to be in diſgrace with you; but I can never think of excuſing myſelf when I am not conſcious that I ever offended.

Myrt. Which way then can you account for your behaviour?

Sir *Harry.* That I had been converſing with a fool, and by remembring the converſation, had brought away ſome of his folly with me. His vanity talk'd in ſo familiar a way of you, that I wanted to give you a caution, and you thought I had ill opinion enough of you to believe him, and ill manners enough at the ſame time to reproach you.

Myrt. But don't you yourſelf think that your careleſs indifferent way muſt have ſurpris'd me moſt prodigiouſly?

Sir *Harry.* When I knew my own thoughts and heart, I was ſurpris'd you could take any thing ill of me.

Myrt. I was determin'd never to forgive you.——But I am grown a changeling, I can determine upon nothing.

Sir *Harry.* Conſider, Madam, deſtiny hath confirm'd our marriage.——All you can do, is but to delay it.

Myrt. It would be more handſome and obliging, I confeſs, to make my love a preſent; yours may wear out too perhaps by tedious expectation. But, upon my word, Sir *Harry*, I can never ſay directly what you would have me.

Sir *Harry.* Let your heart then accompany your hand, and double the value of the gift by putting me in preſent poſſeſſion.

Myrt. Nay, there's no pleaſure in being obſtinate, when one knows one ſhall bring nothing about by it.

Sir *Harry*. Let us readily and cheerfully then accept the fortune the ſtars have allotted for us.

Myrt. You find, Sir *Harry*, that I am not at my own diſpoſal. *Buſy!* Where is the girl? [*Enter* Buſy.

Buſy. Madam!

Myrt. How can I be ſo ridiculous? I really begin to believe I am in earneſt. Sir *Harry* is moſt abominably teazing; ſay what I will, I find he will perſiſt——— and ſince it is decreed———

Sir *Harry*. There is a clergyman of my acquaintance in t'other room.

Myrt. Where is the creature going?

Sir *Harry*. You'll ſhow him to your Lady's apartment.

Myrt. Have I given you any orders?

Sir *Harry*. Give me leave, Madam, to attend you.

Myrt. Stay. [*To* Buſy.

Sir *Harry*. From this hour I date my happineſs.

Myrt. Well then——You may——— [*To* Buſy.

Sir *Harry*. I ſhall be very impatient, Mrs. *Buſy*.

Myrt. Do what Sir *Harry* bids you. [*To* Buſy.

[*Ex. Sir* Harry *leading* Myrtilla.

Buſy. When one is reſolv'd to do a raſh thing, one would chuſe to do it ſuddenly and inconſiderately, for fear of prevention; one hath always time enough to think of it afterwards. Money influences and governs us all; what is there that men and women will not venture for it? ignominy, hanging, marriage. Well, till now I never thought I had ſo much courage. Which of us two now ſhall be firſt ſerv'd, my lady or myſelf? Servants have ſeldom any doubt upon this point. Since it is the laſt duty I ſhall do in place, (firſt of all begging pardon of all ſervants whatſoever, from the higheſt to the loweſt,) I will break through the rules of practice; and for once

I'll act with zeal that never yet was ſhown;
Firſt do my lady's job, and next my own.

END of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

Plowdon's *Room.*

Plowdon. Hubert.

Plowd. FAther *Hubert*, this is very unkind of you ——nay, prithee, father—you muſt and ſhall hear me.

Hub. I am not aſleep, maſter *Plowdon.* That wicked chamberlain without doubt is an enemy to the church, and 'twas in contempt of the function that he lodg'd me over the ſtables. What with the horſes, the carriers and the hoſtler, I had not a wink of ſleep; and I was ſo angry, that for ſwearing and calling names, I could not (as indeed I ought) ſpend the night in devotion.

Plowd. Believe me, father, a cup of wine will refreſh you——That was well done——now I can talk to you. You muſt know then, *Frank* hath comply'd, but my wench hath her mother's ſpirit, and is as obſtinate as ever. You muſt bring her to reaſon. Talk to her; preach to her; frighten her. Of all men alive 'tis not for me to talk to her; why, a wench who will contradict no body elſe, will contradict her father. They are upon the ſame eaſy foot with a father, as a wife is with her husband——Do you mind me?

Hub. Dear Sir, I beg your pardon. [*Drinks.*

Plowd. Hear me but a moment, father. Mark me: This then is the caſe; I have conſider'd that while the ceremony of matrimony is adminiſtring, 'tis neceſſary the man and wife ſhould appear to agree. Nodding again, father!

Hub. I hear you, Sir. Indeed, Mr. *Plowdon*, it was only a nod of aſſent to what you were ſaying.

Plowd. Now, while you preach my daughter into obedience, I'll go and bring *Frank* hither; and the inſtant ſhe conſents, you ſhall nick them ſlab-daſh with the ceremony.

Hub. Slab-daſh with the ceremony——I heard you, maſter *Plowdon*; and I ſhall exhort her to take a huſband ſlab-daſh with the ceremony.

Plowd. This key, father, is the only ſecurity I have of her duty; and this, putting confidence in the ſtrength of your virtue, I deliver into your poſſeſſion.

Hub. Really, I never was more ſleepy; but the fit is now over, and you may rely on my pious endeavours.

Plowd. As ſoon as I am gone, you will take the opportunity of talking with her; and at my return with *Frank*, I hope to find her in a good diſpoſition. Be watchful, be vigilant, father; for I truſt you with a woman.

SCENE II.

Hubert, Florinda.

Hub. TO perſuade a woman againſt her inclination! My negotiation will, I am afraid, be attended with ſome difficultys. Inclination is impregnable; it will hold out againſt the ſtrongeſt attack of eloquence and reaſon. Then, to perſuade a young girl that her father knows what is moſt convenient for her; that it is undutiful to chuſe a husband for herſelf; that ſhe muſt love with diſcretion; that ſhe muſt truſt her father; that ſhe muſt have no little private ſchemes of her own; impoſſibilitys, all impoſſibilitys! I know the young huſſy will in her heart only laugh at me. Tho' the undertaking be deſperate, we muſt diſcharge our duty. [*Unlocks the door.*

Enter Florinda.

Hub. I hope, young Lady, you have no other objection to Mr. *Doggrell* but that he is your father's propoſal.

Flor. The fellow is a fool, I tell you, and I hate him.

Hub. Why you would not ſure, child, chuſe a husband for his wiſdom! Conſult the married women of your

your acquaintance, and they will tell you 'tis ſometimes very inconvenient; you will be more liable to be found out. Obey your father's commands, young Lady, and you will have a better chance to command your husband ——And ſo, Madam, you will conſent that Mr. *Doggrell* ——I beg your pardon, Madam——I was ſomewhat overtaken with ſleep——I had not one wink all night long—Drowſineſs had almoſt broke the thread of my argument ——As I was ſaying, Madam——

Flor. Sit you down, father *Hubert*. Cheer up your ſpirits with a glaſs of wine. Your judgment, Sir, muſt tell you that love is an appetite that will not be govern'd by another's palate: and one ſo converſant in female-confeſſions as you, muſt know that the combats of love and filial duty are very frequent. [*Nods.*

[*Fills to him again.*

You forget your liquor, Sir. [*He drinks.*

Hub. You talk very well, child, in the woman's way. —But I wiſh you would talk a little reaſonably. [*Nods.*

Flor. What, refuſe to pledge a woman! [*She fills again.*

Hub. Bleſs me! I had almoſt forgot myſelf again. [*Drinks.*

I am unmannerly I muſt confeſs. You may think what you pleaſe, but I affirm that diſobedience is not only unbeſeeming, but ſinful. [*nods.*] Now a daughter not being a free agent——— [*Nods.*] [*She fills again.*

Flor. How, father *Hubert*, is that your doctrine? Are we born ſlaves, father? [*Very loud.*

Hub. I profeſs, Madam, you made me ſtart.

Flor. You ſee the liquor ſtands before you ſtill, father. You always forget yourſelf.

Hub. If I were not very thirſty, I could have ſworn I had drank before. [*drinks.*] You ſay right, Madam. No, Madam, I beg pardon, you ſay wrong. [*nods.*] But what was it you ſaid? ——Obedience, or diſobedience, or ſome ſuch thing——I have drank already—— don't wake me.

Flor. He's faſt. He ſnores delightfully. Father—Father *Hubert*—all's ſafe——no body at his own ſermons could ſleep more heartily——juſt out of one cage into another——Now then for my charming fellow. The landlord is my friend, and ſhall direct me to him. So. ——Very ſound! Sleep on in peace. Adieu.

SCENE III.

Hubert aſleep, *Plowdon*, *Griſt*.

Plowd. IS not this vexatious, neighbour *Griſt*? Is it not reaſonable for a man to be in a paſſion with this provoking puppy? To be out of the way juſt at this inſtant! My cane trembles in my hand to be at him.——What a woundy deal of trouble do we fathers take to marry our daughters! and yet the huſſys have not one bit of gratitude.

Griſt. You ſhould conſider, maſter *Plowdon*, for all the trouble you take before marriage, they have all the trouble after.

Plowd. 'Tis not to be born, neighbour *Griſt* — And I take it unfriendly of you to perſuade me to keep my temper.——But father *Hubert* by this time may have brought my daughter to a better diſpoſition.——What-adickins, aſleep! And the girl ſtill confin'd to her cloſet!

Griſt. Nay, Sir, I don't think father *Hubert* ſo much in the wrong. He hath given her good advice, but would not truſt her with it without locking her up, that it might not be thrown away upon her.

Plowd. Furies! what is the meaning of this? Father *Hubert*,—Father *Hubert*,—Father *Hubert*.— [*Stamps.*

Hubert. I beg your pardon, Madam, your reproof is juſt. I ſhould indeed have forgot to take my glaſs had not you put me in mind of it [*Yawns, and drinks.*

Plowd. What have you done with my daughter?

Hubert. I, I, I.——

Plowd. What have you done with yourſelf?

Hubert. I, I can't——

Plowd. Give me the key. Give it me.

Hubert. Good lack a-day, and is it you, Sir?

[Plowdon *ſnatches the Key, runs into the Cloſet, and returns.*

Plowd. Gone! eſcap'd! Plague, thunder and combuſtion! This is all roguery and contrivance. Anſwer me; what have you done with my daughter?

Hubert. Nothing, maſter *Plowdon*, upon my word, nothing.

Plowd.

Plowd. Come, come, father, I will have ſatisfaction in this affair. What have you done with my daughter, I ſay?

Hubert. If there is any thing done, 'twas all her own doing; I know nothing of it; and indeed how could I, when I was aſleep?

Plowd. Anſwer me you, you, you——Your function keeps me from uſing you as I ought, ſo I ſhall ſay nothing ſhocking or indecent.——You have, I fear, father, been a rogue in this affair.——You know I know you to be a raſcal.——Were you brib'd by her or her fellow,——or both? You treacherous, pimping——But I ſay no more.——Now is it not a hard caſe, neighbour *Griſt*, that a man can't talk to theſe fellows in the ſtile they deſerve? —— What is become of her? for I will know.

Hubert. Is ſhe gone then?

Plowd. Let me have no lying excuſes. If you won't tell me when I ſpeak to you civilly, you muſt take what follows; for I won't make myſelf ſick, and ſmother my paſſion any longer for you nor any man alive. You hypocritical pimping——but I forbear,——and you are witneſs, neighbour *Griſt*, that I give no foul language. Are you dumb? Have you ſlept away invention? Have you never a lye awake? You muſt then ſtill be aſleep for certain.

Hubert. So you ſay ſhe is gone. 'Tis ſomewhat unlucky, I grant you. Keep your temper. But who, I pray, is ſhe gone with?

Plowd. Ay, who is ſhe gone with? Who have you ſold her to? Into what bawd's hands have you put her?

Hubert. For ſhame, maſter *Plowdon*, talk more decently, I beg you.

Plowd. Anſwer me—I will have an anſwer. Take notice, neighbour *Griſt*, that I give him not one indecent expreſſion, though the raſcal deſerves every thing one could ſay to him.

Hubert. Pray, Sir, don't be ſcurrilous. 'Tis your and my misfortune, and we muſt make the beſt of it. I own I was aſleep.

Griſt. Nay, ſo far indeed, father *Hubert* ſays true.—He really was aſleep.

Plowd. Neighbour *Griſt*, you lye, (excuſe the expreſſion.) 'Twas all dog's ſleep. I am not to be banter'd,

ter'd, father. [*Walking about in a Paſſion.*] I am not to be abus'd and impos'd upon—pimp. [*Walking.*] It would make a man mad to be trick'd, bubbled, and laugh'd at by ſuch an—impudent raſcal.

Griſt. You forget yourſelf: only think, dear Sir, that I am to be witneſs for you; and impudent raſcal is an indecent expreſſion.

Plowd. Mind your own affairs, neighbour *Griſt.* What is it to you what I call him? I am in a paſſion—I own it. And when a man is in a paſſion, expreſſions go for nothing, that you know; and you know too that he deſerves much worſe uſage from my hands. You know it, I ſay, neighbour *Griſt.*

SCENE IV.

Plowdon, Griſt, Hubert, Spigot, Aliſon, Shipman.

Aliſ. BLESS us all! what's the matter?

Spig. Miſchief to be ſure.

Shipm. They have fallen foul of one another, that's for certain.

Spig. Keep your temper: What hath provok'd you, dear Sir? Keep your temper.

Plowd. I'll keep it or not keep it, as I think fit. So, now you are anſwer'd, landlord. [*Walks about muttering.*] An undermining deceitful dog!

Aliſ. But, maſter *Plowdon*, to my thinking, ſure, 'tis not worth while to be in a paſſion, if you keep it all to yourſelf. Now when we women fall out, we generally let our neighbours be the better for it.

Plowd. A Son of a whore! [*Walks about muttering.*

Aliſ. Gracious! What is the matter with the old gentleman, goodman *Griſt*?

Shipm. Mayhap the gentleman may be like our captain, who ſwears and ſwaggers every now and then, with he does not know who, and he does not know why, only to ſhow his authority.

Griſt. To be ſure he puts me in mind of my wife. Speaking to him does but make him worſe. She would never cool if I did not leave her to herſelf.

Aliſ. Why really, goodman *Griſt*, I muſt confeſs that was always my way too. And ſay what you will, what men call good advice is very provoking.

Plowd. My daughter, dame——

Aliſ. Ay, to be ſure: I knew by the violence of your paſſion it could only be with a wife or a daughter, or ſome ſpecial good friend.

Plowd. I am cool, dame, and you may talk to me now.——My daughter, as I was ſaying, hath been ſeduc'd by that ſon of a ——— I was almoſt provok'd to let ſlip a haſty expreſſion, or ſo.———My daughter, dame, is inveigled, and run away.

Aliſ. If that is the caſe, you had better reſerve your paſſion for ſome more convenient opportunity, and look for your daughter.

Plowd. Let it be your care, neighbour *Griſt*, to find me out *Doggrell*; myſelf, with my landlord and his friend, will purſue the wench. And my good dame in the mean time ſhall pump intelligence out of that prevaricating —— out of fryar *Hubert*. As a woman, dame, you muſt underſtand ſomewhat of prevarication, and you can deal with him in his own way. At him, Madam. Do what you can for me. We'll ſoon be with you again.

SCENE V.

Aliſon, Hubert.

Aliſ. IF he finds his daughter, 'tis my opinion, he will find one with her who had found her before. But what's all this to me? I have affairs of my own upon my hands. That Mrs. *Buſy* could not be found, is very provoking. This is the firſt time I ever bilk'd an aſſignation. If I could have got the habit, by this time I had ſecur'd my man; Inclination was ready; nothing but that was wanting. Gracious! father *Hubert*, I never once thought of you.

Hubert. Ah dame, if ever a man deſerv'd excommunication———

Aliſ. Nay, for that matter, father, if you have let the young wench eſcape, I ſhould not have the worſe opinion of you. Why, ſure, you ſhould ſuccour the diſtreſs'd. Gracious now, only think of the good you may have done. By ſaving the girl from being marry'd againſt her conſent, you may have ſav'd her from giving her

her husband daily provocations, and her husband from thouſands of daily oaths: You may have kept him and his eſtate from being eat out by harlots, and her from variety of adulteries.—You may, ſure, have done much good by it.

Hubert. But I have not done it, I tell you, dame. I know nothing of her eſcape. And ſo I leave you all in your errors.

SCENE VI.

Aliſon, Doggrell, Buſy.

Dogg. SO, the ceremony is over, and I am happy.

Buſy. It will be the pleaſure of my life to make you ſo.

Dogg. Upon the firſt diſcovery of my marriage, the old fellow may be brutal; and an unmannerly word to your Ladyſhip may provoke me. So, dear Madam, for a minute or two keep out of ſight, and let me take the brunt of his anger alone. [Buſy *in the nun's dreſs retires.*] I thought to have found the old Put my guardian here. My good dame, I am infinitely oblig'd to you.

Aliſ. Nay, don't be out of hope. She was diſappointed to the laſt degree, that ſhe could not keep her aſſignation. Gracious, Sir! I was as much vex'd, ſure, as you could be for your life. And ſhe bid me tell you——

Dogg. But hold, dame, here comes *Plowdon.*

SCENE VII.

Aliſon, Doggrell, Buſy, Plowdon, Spigot, Griſt, Shipman.

Plowd. SO, Neighbour *Griſt*, you could, it ſeems, learn no tale or tidings of him. But he's here, I ſee. Now, are not you a puppy, *Frank*? Had you been in the way, all my care by this time had been over. Did not you promiſe me that you would make an end of this affair and marry?

Dogg. I won't ſuffer theſe liberties, Sir; and ſo, Sir, I venture to tell you boldly that I am marry'd.

Plowd.

Plowd. 'Tis all over then. I forgive thee, boy, and am heartily glad 'tis no worſe. Had you invited me to the wedding, you might have ſav'd me from an ocean of paſſion. But where, *Frank*, is my wench? My anger is blown over; 'twas an innocent whim, and I forgive you both.

Aliſ. Gracious! And what is become of my affair all this while? This young fellow's proceeding (to my thinking) is ſomewhat unaccountable. [*Aſide.*

Dogg. Now, Sir, as a proof that I am married, this is my lady. I know nothing of your daughter, and I don't value your anger a ruſh. The law ſhall give me my own; and ſo, Sir, your ſervant.

Plowd. Where will this end? Mankind is in a combination againſt me.———I'm dumb. I ſhall burſt.

Aliſ. And are you marry'd then, Lady? Gracious! Madam, to be ſure I never was ſo ſurpriz'd at any thing in all my life!

Buſy. 'Tis to no purpoſe now to conceal myſelf. The thing muſt come out. Don't you know me then, dame?

Aliſ. 'Slidikins! Mrs. *Buſy!* I am finely jilted, I find! to take the advantage of an old woman too! Was this well done, Mrs. *Buſy*?

Dogg. What do you mean, Madam? Who are you talking to?

Aliſ. To your wife, you ſay.

Dogg. To a woman of rank and diſtinction.

Aliſ. To the woman of a woman of rank and diſtinction. Why, you are bit, fool. Look upon her, and be convinc'd. Since the thing is done, ſhow thyſelf, girl, and make it out of diſpute. 'Tis good to have witneſſes in theſe matters. When a man is in the caſe, we women, ſure, ſtick at nothing; and I can't blame the girl. Mrs. *Doggrell*, I wiſh you joy with all my heart.

Dogg. A chamber-maid!

Buſy. Till you did me the honour to take me out of that condition. I ſhall always, Sir, with gratitude remember the obligation.

Dogg. And is it to you, my good dame, that I am oblig'd for this eternal diſgrace?

Aliſ. After what you have done by me, Madam, I am ſure I of all womankind ought not to give you a recom-

recommendation; but when a thing is over——I always love to take the good-natur'd ſide. Let me tell you, Mr. *Doggrell*, tho' by her circumſtances ſhe was reduced to ſervice, ſhe is very well born, and never the leſs a gentlewoman.

Plowd. Now that this puppy is made a fool of, is ſome ſort of ſatisfaction.——My daughter was not well enough born for you, coxcomb!

Aliſ. Things have taken their turn, you ſee, in ſpite of us. This young fellow hath play'd the fool without your approbation. Your daughter too, take my word for it, wherever ſhe is, hath done ſomething or other without your approbation. So, by the way of a frolick or ſo, why ſhould we not divert ourſelves? What think you, my heart of oak, have not I a bonny complexion? nay, look upon me, I have a face like an antient medal, antiquity does but add to its value. Revenge yourſelf by your own marriage, and baulk all their contrivances.

Plowd. And ſo have the revenge light upon my own head too.——I wiſh women would be leſs impertinent.

SCENE VIII.

Aliſon, Doggrell, Buſy, Plowdon, Spigot, Griſt, Shipman, Merit, Florinda.

Plowd. AY, yonder the jade comes, and the fellow with her! ſhe thinks now 'tis nothing but to ask bleſſing and have it. I can't bear the ſight of the huſſy.

Flor. Your pardon, Sir.

Plowd. You ſhall ſtarve——you jade.

Merit. Your forgiveneſs and bleſſing, Sir.

Plowd. You ſhall be hang'd—you dog——a bleſſing! a halter!

Aliſ. Nay, but maſter *Plowdon*——

Plowd. Furies! I'll hear none of you—I hate you all.

Aliſ. Be calm; dear, good Sir, have patience.

Plowd. Was there ever ſuch an unreaſonable requeſt! A woman now with half the provocation would be ten times as angry as I am.——My bleſſing! a halter, a halter, a halter.

[*Exit* Plowdon.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

Aliſon, *Doggrell*, *Buſy*, *Spigot*, *Griſt*, *Shipman*, *Merit*, *Florinda*, Sir *Harry Gauntlet*, *Myrtilla*.

Aliſ. SIR *Harry Gauntlet* and *Myrtilla*! Gracious! who would have thought it? Every body provided but me! This is very hard now. But I have had my husbands, and buried my husbands; and what can any woman wiſh more? ſo I muſt e'en be content.

Myrt. My dear *Florinda*, I wiſh you joy. I was impatient, child, to ſee you ſo happy, as I know you muſt be at this inſtant; and I know it will add to your pleaſure to ſee me happy. There is no oppoſing fatality. Sir *Harry* hath ſucceeded at laſt, and I am married, child. Now are not you mightily ſurpriz'd?

Sir *Harry.* Seriouſly, Mr. *Doggrell*, I know her to be a gentlewoman. She hath a taſte too of poetry, and ſhe herſelf writes very prettily. Believe me, ſhe will prove a very agreeable companion. I know my wife will think herſelf happy in the continuance of Mrs. *Doggrell*'s Friendſhip, as I ſhall in my improving my acquaintance with you.

Flor. Never think of it, Madam—'tis not to be done ——my father was ſo outrageous, and is ſo poſitive, a reconciliation is impoſſible.

Sir *Harry.* I have ſome intereſt with him. Upon the firſt occaſion it ſhall all be employ'd in your ſervice.

Enter a Drawer.

Draw. The pilgrims, ladies, in the next room are preparing for a dance. If you like it, with leave, they will come among you, and will be glad that you would join in the entertainment.

Griſt. By all means, by all means.

Myrt. It will be very agreeable and obliging.

A Dance.

Aliſ. Now, Madam, is not this better than being a nun? to be cag'd in a convent for life, and made a prieſt's

prieſt's finging-bird! But women have a tendency to what is good——I always thought ſo.

Sir *Harry*. Or a tendency to ſuperſtition.

When ſuperſtition hath the mind engroſs'd,
Judgment is laid aſleep, and reaſon loſt;
By fancy'd omens we have joy and ſorrow,
Sit moap'd at home, or gad abroad to-morrow;
By that we ſink our joys, our fears enhance,
And all we do, is right or wrong by chance.
But ſhall I cenſure viſionary ſchemes?
Myrtilla, *no.——I thank your ſtars and dreams.*

Aliſ. And with good reaſon, in troth! Beſides, let me tell you, Sir *Harry*, you may call it ſuperſtition, or what you will——I do inſiſt upon it, as I ſaid before, that we women, ſure, have a tendency to what is good.

For through the ſex this pious humour runs;
Were there no men, all women would be nuns.

F I N I S.